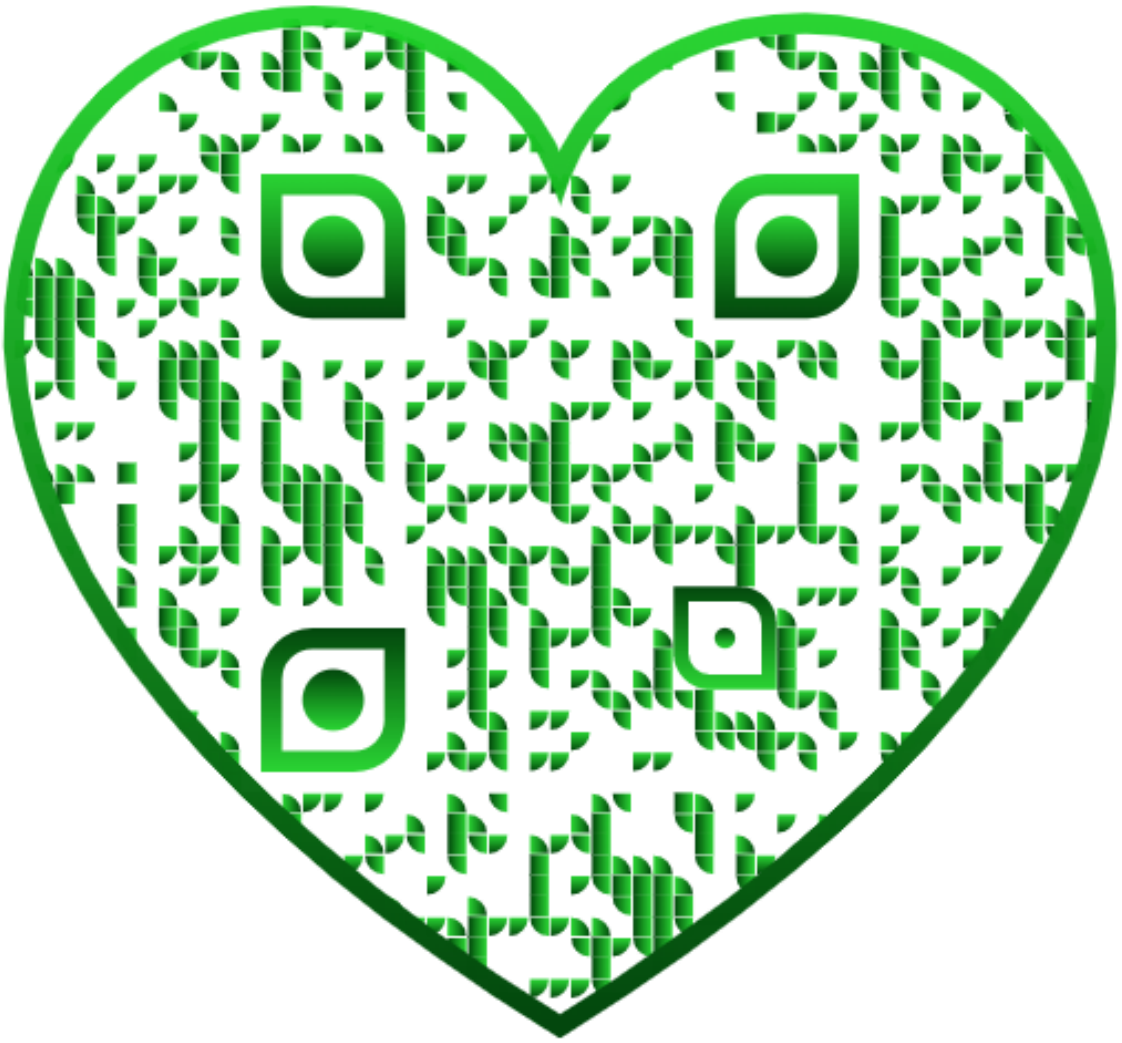
-The Battle Between the Ark of the
Covenant and the Mark of the Beast -
CONFRONTATION



CONFRONTATION -

BATTLE BETWEEN
THE ARK OF THE COVENANT
AND THE MARK OF THE BEAST

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INTRODUCTION

The story begins

Ron Wyatt had already been working on several biblical archaeological discoveries when in 1978 he travelled together with his two sons to the Sinai Peninsula. At this time the Sinai Peninsula was still occupied by Israel, and the only way to access the Red Sea where they intended to dive, was via Israel. After studying the history of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, Ron located a site that matched perfectly with the description of the area where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea.

One of the most famous stories in the Bible is that of Moses as he leads the Israelites out of Egypt, closely pursued by the Egyptian army. As they reach the edge of the Red Sea the reality hits them, they have no way of escape. Just when they believe all is lost, Moses raises his staff, and God miraculously parts the sea before their very eyes. And so the Israelites crossed the Red Sea while the water stood like solid walls on either side of them. The Egyptian army followed after them but the walls of water crashed down upon them, slaughtering Pharaoh and his entire army.

Ron Wyatt and his two sons, Danny and Ronny, travelled to Muzayyinah in Nuweiba, to dive in search of the remains of the army, which had perished there. Muzayyinah means "Moses' opening", and Ron discovered several clues that indicated he was at the real site. If the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea here, the famous Mount Sinai had to be in Saudi Arabia, and not in the modern day Sinai Peninsula. The Bible states that Moses was to return with the Israelites to his place of refuge. The same place he hid for forty years, in order to escape the wrath of Pharaoh. Therefore Ron knew Mount Sinai had to have been outside Egyptian control. The site which today claims to be Mount Sinai in the Sinai Peninsula was close to Egyptian checkpoints at the time of Moses. It was also in the vicinity of a temple built by the Egyptian princess Hatshepsut. It would have been impossible for Moses to take refuge in this place for forty years without

being detected. Also, the site in Saudi Arabia that Ron claimed to be the true Mount Sinai was in Midian. Midian was the biblical name for the place where Moses hid for forty years, and the same place he subsequently took the Israelites.

Ron had already discovered several coralised chariot wheels in the Red Sea, dating to around the time of the Red Sea crossing. During a dive in 1978 Ron suffered serious sunburn and had to postpone the expedition. His condition was such that his legs were swollen to the point where it was impossible for him to don his fins. At this time there were limited overnight facilities in the area, and due to Ron's condition they decided to return to Jerusalem to await their return flights from Tel Aviv.

Disappointed by the outcome of the expedition Ron sat in the hotel until the swelling in his legs had eased. As best as his condition would allow, Ron walked in the surrounding area by the northern wall of Jerusalem's old city. While he was conversing with a local official in Roman antiquities, something happened to Ron that he had never before experienced. They stopped by an ancient stone quarry known to some as "the Calvary escarpment", and Ron's hand pointed to a site being used as a trash dump. His mouth said, "That's Jeremiah's grotto and the Ark of the Covenant is in there." Ron was shocked at what he said. It was as if someone had lifted his arm and said these words through him! He had never before considered searching for the Ark of the Covenant. The man who accompanied Ron became enthusiastic, and promised he could obtain written permission for him to excavate. In addition, he would supply not only free accommodation, but free food as well.

Ron knew this was an extremely unusual experience, and would not commence upon excavation until he understood more. The entire incident seemed to him "supernatural". So Ron, being a Christian and knowing that supernatural events can also originate from an evil source, wondered if in fact it was God who was behind it. Why would the most sacred of Israelite treasures be under this trash dump? Ron felt that he had to temporarily refuse the man's offer. He had to return home to Tennessee in the United States to begin serious study into the world's greatest lost treasure from antiquity.

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Part 1
The Ark of the Covenant

"And they shall make an ark of shittim wood… And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold… And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold… And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat… And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee."

Exodus 25:10-21

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Israelites

When the Israelites, led by Moses, escaped Egypt to flee to Midian they encamped in a mountain called Mount Sinai. After several hundred years in Egypt, these people had forgotten much of what their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had taught them concerning their God, who had created the world in six days. These people were called "Israelites" after Jacob, as they descended from Jacob's twelve sons. Moses records in Genesis that Jacob was given a new name from God after he "wrestled with God". Jacob had been tortured with the fear that his own brother would take his life in revenge for an injustice Jacob had committed over fourteen years earlier. In his desperation he clung to God and to the belief that God had forgiven him of his former offence against his brother. After wrestling with God the whole night, he was told, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and has prevailed." (Genesis 32:28)

Moses

Although many of the Israelites had forgotten most of the teachings of their God, there remained some who maintained the faith of their forefathers. One of these was a woman who descended from Levi, one of Jacob's twelve sons. Her name was Jokebed. The Israelites had been allowed to prosper in Egypt through Joseph, Jacob's youngest son. Joseph held the highest political position in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. Pharaoh Djoser was pharaoh at that

time, and inherited terrific power in Egypt when the population sold their properties to him during the seven-year famine, which befell the country. Several generations after Pharaoh Djoser, new pharaohs from southern Egypt came to power. Initially the Israelites and their religion were respected due to Joseph's great authority, but now the situation had changed in Egypt, and the Israelites were greatly oppressed. In fear that the Israelites would become too powerful and one day take over the country, the new Pharaoh decided to prevent any potential problems by slaughtering all newly born Israelite boys.

Jokebed gave birth to a boy named Moses at that time, and tried to hide him for as long as she could. Her prayers to God for help were answered, and He arranged events so that Pharaoh's daughter found the baby in a basket among the reeds on The Nile. The baby's older sister, who kept watch over him, approached the princess requesting that the boy's mother be allowed to nurse him. Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and so Jokebed trained the child in the Jewish faith until he was about twelve years old. This boy became a Crown Prince, but because of the things his real mother, Jokebed, had taught him, he refused to identify himself with his foster mother. The Bible tells us, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Hebrews 11:24).

As Moses held a high position in Egypt, many of the Israelites hoped he would deliver them from slavery. The situation grew increasingly tense because Moses refused to forget his people's identity, and even Pharaoh recognised the potential danger for the future of Egypt if Moses inherited the throne. Events drew to a climax after Moses murdered an Egyptian in order to protect an Israelite slave, and he was forced to flee the country. He knew that his crime would be unacceptable to Pharaoh, and to make matters worse, some of the Israelites had expressed a strong reluctance to accept him as their "prince and judge" (Exodus 2:14). All this weighed heavily on Moses' shoulders and eventually he lost his courage. While his own people were against him, how could he possibly deliver them from their bondage? In fear of Pharaoh, and with little support from his own people, Moses fled to Midian. There he remained for forty years until he eventually returned to Egypt, an eighty year old man. In Midian he lived a quiet and God fearing life as a shepherd for a priest called Jethro. After some time, Moses married one of Jethro's seven daughters, and had a son he named Gershom. During his time in Midian he wrote the Book of Genesis, recording events at the beginning of world, including creation, the great flood and Noah's

Ark, the confusion of language at the Tower of Babel and the various experiences of his ancestors. Historical accounts had been passed down from generation to generation, and from his mother to him.

Moses was called by the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, to go back to Egypt and then return with all the descendants of Israel. This message was delivered to Moses by a voice in a burning bush. Moses enquired, "...when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (Exodus 3:13-14).

The laws

"I AM" promised to be with Moses and to assist him when he was to deliver the several hundred thousand people from their slavery in Egypt. When Moses was to return to the place where he had conversed with "I AM", he was to bring the Israelites with him. Throughout the entire exodus from Egypt "I AM" accompanied the Israelites veiled behind a cloud by day, and a fire by night.

The descendants of Israel were many, and the oppression in Egypt made most forget what their God stood for. One of the first things they were reminded of, was the necessity to keep the Sabbath. The day that God declared to be holy after creating the earth in six days then resting on the seventh day. The seventh day of the week was intended to be a memorial to God who created the earth. Being the Creator, He was worshiped as the one true God. As this was the identifying mark of which God they worshiped, it was important to teach them that to rest on this day was an essential part of their covenant with God. When the Israelites were wandering in the desert with no food, the people began to starve. But "I AM" sustained them and provided them with "manna", which was bread that fell from heaven. Six days of the week they would collect the manna, but on the seventh day God sent them nothing (Exodus 16). In such a manner He taught His children to rest on the Sabbath, something that for hundreds of years was impossible for them to do under the tyranny of Egyptian slavery.

There were many other commandments that God wanted them to learn so they could live in peace with each other and with God. Previously it was unneces-

sary to have these moral laws written down, but because time had corrupted the generations and their minds, God decided that they now needed these commandments some how recorded.

The reason "I AM" called a people from out of the world, was for them to represent His principles to the world (Psalm 105:45). Principles that alone could make mankind happy and would allow them to live in peace with one another. God had created the world perfect, but man had chosen to break God's moral law, and this caused catastrophic consequences. Mankind was hurting, and cried to God blaming Him for the misery in the world. So now God tried to teach them these basic principles so that man could see it was possible to live a good life, and escape much suffering if they only chose to do what was right.

God created man and He knows exactly how his body functions. So He gave man dietary laws in order to avoid disease and prolong life. If they were obeyed, these health laws as well as the moral laws would make the Israelites temperate and healthy witnesses to the world. Eventually when God gave them their own country, the world would recognise the happiness and prosperity this lifestyle offered. Thus God intended that the world would gain confidence in His rulership, and understand that all His commandments were for their own prosperity. He who created everything, wanted His creation to understand that the laws were in place because He cared about them and loved them as a parent loves His child.

The Ten Commandments on two Tables of Stone

Moses was told to climb to the top of Mount Sinai, where the Israelites were encamped, and there "I AM" was going to write the moral law for them. Before Moses set out to receive this law, "I AM", through Moses, had already informed the Israelites which laws He wanted them to observe if they were to represent him as a people. When the people had heard the laws, they promised "I AM" they would keep these laws. Moses recorded all these laws in a book together with the promise the Israelites had given, and then he ratified, or confirmed this covenant with blood from a sacrificed animal and sprinkled this on behalf of the people. Subsequently Moses climbed the mountain and received the two tables of stone upon which "I AM" had written ten simple commandments. "I AM" wrote on both sides of these tables of stone.

When Moses descended the mountain with the tables of stone, the Israelites had already broken their promise to God! They had made a golden calf representing one of the Egyptian gods, and they worshiped it, dancing provocatively around it.

They did this despite one of the commandments they had so recently promised to keep, being, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image". This type of idolatry was often accompanied by sexual immorality and often violence. On witnessing this Moses became so desperate and so angry for the sake of his God that he threw down the tables of stone and broke them. Later the people regretted their disloyalty and appealed to God for a second chance, and so Moses again climbed the mountain in order to receive a new set of commandments, written in stone. Once again "I AM" wrote the Ten Commandments on the tables of stone, the commandments that would give God's people happiness, peace and prosperity if they observed them.

The Ark

So that the people would be reminded of God's covenant with them every day, He gave them a complex system of ceremonies to perform. Everything in this system had its own meaning. "I AM" requested that Moses order the construction of a tabernacle, and fill it with several objects, including the Ark of the Covenant, which were an, "example and shadow of heavenly things..." (Hebrews 8:5). To accomodate the two tables of stone Moses was to make a wooden box overlaid with gold. In other words, an ark within which they would lie.

> "And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it: And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it. And he made staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold. And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece

Egyptian hieroglyph showing the worship style used by the Israelites at Mt. Siniai

> made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat; One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy seatward were the faces of the cherubims." (Exodus 37:1-9)

The location of the Ark

The tabernacle and its furniture were now erected after the pattern Moses had been shown from, "the heavenly things". It was to be set up as a tent with a surrounding forecourt. There was only one entrance to the complex. The first item of furniture one would see when entering the forecourt was a square altar for burnt offerings. It had a grate of bronze wire and horns on the four corners of the altar. All the tools required for ministering at this altar were constructed from bronze. The altar also had staves so it could be transported.

The next thing one would find before entering the tent was a bronze laver intended as a vessel at which one could wash. The tent itself was comprised of two rooms. In the first room stood a table made from acacia wood and overlaid with gold. Upon it sat twelve loaves of shewbread. Thus this table was called the Table of Shewbread. Opposite the table was a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand was constructed from a single piece of gold and had seven

branches with almond-shaped cups. On the Seven-Branched Lampstand were seven lamps that burned with oil.

Before the entrance to the second room was the Altar of Incense. This too was made from acacia wood, plated with gold, and had four horns at each corner. Between the first and the second apartments was a thick curtain, so that whoever occupied the first room could not see into the second room. The first room was called the Holy, and the second room was called the Most Holy. The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Most Holy, and the cloud which "I AM" veiled His presence with, now rested above the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant. No one was permitted entrance to the Most Holy except for one person, specially elected, who was to bring with him blood from the sacrificial animals once a year. If anybody else dared to enter, God would strike him dead instantly. The LORD had chosen to reveal Himself in a cloud above the Mercy Seat, and thus declared it His temporal, earthly house. And so the Ark of the Covenant was a reassurance that God was with them.

The Sanctuary:
The tabernacle and the brazen altar and laver.
The first apartment: the Holy, with the Table of Shewbread, Candlestick and the Altar of Incense.
The second apartment: the Most Holy with the Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat and the Law of Moses.

THE HISTORY OF THE ARK

In battle

The Israelites had been promised a land where they could develop, and be a witness to God's plan for the world, but much of this land was already inhabited by other nations. The land had already been promised to Abraham, but God waited several hundred years before delivering the land to his descendents, Israel. In that time the present inhabitants had become so evil that He allowed them to be conquered. These people sacrificed infants to their gods, and indulged in perverse sexual acts, and God's longsuffering had come to an end. If these nations were allowed to spread, other nations would soon be overwhelmed by their corruption too. Their probation had closed and the Israelites would now conquer this land. When Moses died and Joshua was placed in charge, they began to claim their land beginning at the Jordanian border. They were to cross the Jordan River in the same way as the previous generation had crossed the Red Sea. The city on the other side of the Jordan River, which they were preparing to invade, was Jericho. The inhabitants there already feared the Israelites, as the story of their God opening up the Red Sea had spread to every nation. This time God told them to follow the Ark of the Covenant. When those who carried the Ark set foot in the Jordan River, the water from upstream stood up like a dam, stopping the water from flowing before them, so they could cross safely. They were also instructed by God to carry the Ark before them into battle. The LORD rested in the cloud above the Mercy Seat on the Ark, and this taught them that without Him they could not be victorious. So to bear the Ark before their front

line in battle was a reminder that God was leading them and would give them victory.

Joshua and the Israelites defeated thirty-one kings, and still there was more land to claim. Their very name struck fear into the hearts of the neighbouring countries and they were ready to fulfil God's intention for them as a people.

But not long after they started to worship idols again, breaking the covenant they had made with God. So God's plan for them gradually deteriorated, eventually to the point where they made it impossible for Him to fulfil. The exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea and their victories over all the kings had made the entire region intensely interested in the God of Israel. The other nations showed great respect and admiration towards the God of the Israelites, and they were now in a perfect position to present God's plan, and His law, to them, and forward peace and tolerance on earth.

However, as time continued the Israelites grew increasingly unfaithful, and began to experience defeat in battle. As their moral standards dropped to that of their neighbours, God could no longer bless them with victory.

The Ark's journeys

From the time when the Ten Commandments were first placed in the Ark to when it disappeared, the Ark saw many different resting places. When it was not being transported it was usually in the tabernacle with the other furniture that Moses had constructed at Sinai. Every time the tabernacle was erected, it was done so after the pattern that God gave to Moses, with the Ark in the Most Holy.

When the Ark of the Covenant was in the sanctuary in Shiloh, corruption was prevalent amongst many of those that served there. "I AM" had been silent towards these corrupt ministers, but now He sent prophets to warn them. He used a young boy called Samuel, who was sleeping in a room off of the sanctuary where the Ark was situated. God gave to Samuel a message of judgement upon Eli, who was responsible for God's house, or sanctuary. God was to call an end to the corruption in the temple services, by closing it down for a long period. The Israelites had become unfaithful to their covenant with God, and had become blind to the meaning of the Ark of the Covenant. They thought that

all they needed was the presence of the Ark to win their battles and forgot that the Ark possessed no power of its own to give them victory. When they fought with the Philistines, Israel lost four thousand men. In their defective understanding they decided to take the Ark of the Covenant out of the sanctuary in Shiloh, and carry it with them into battle. They hoped that this way they could "force" God to be with them in the battle. They had the Ark, and were so confident of victory that they began cheering. The accounts of how God had sent plagues across Egypt and had led the Israelites across the Red Sea were still in the minds of the Philistines, and they trembled when they heard that Israel had brought the Ark to battle. Nevertheless, without the blessing of God, the Israelites were defeated, and the Philistines stole the Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark was then taken to Ebenezer to Ashod and into a house of idols. The common religion was sun worship, and the god of the Philistines, Dagon, was a god of sun worship. The Ark was placed next to a statue of Dagon.

> "And when they of Ashod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the Ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him." (1Samuel 5:3-4)

The Ark became a severe problem for the Philistines while they had possession of it, so they sent it away to a town called, Gath. When the Ark came to Gath all the men in the town were smitten by "emerods". Recognising the cause of this plague they hurried to send the Ark on to the town Ekron. The Ekronites feared the Ark and refused to let the Ark stay. When the Ark had been passed around the Philistines for seven months, they were hit so hard by such plagues that they decided to return it to the Israelites. They remembered the outcome of the Egyptians when they opposed God and hoped that God would remove the plagues if they returned the Ark. They secured the Ark on a carriage and harnessed it to cattle. No one directed the carriage and the cattle departed completely unaccompanied to Beth-shemesh in Israel.

> "And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see

The remains of the area around the temple in Shiloh.

it. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there...” (1Samuel 6:13-14).

Several people at Beth-shemesh then broke God’s instruction not to look into the Ark, and fifty thousand and seventy men were killed. So they also greatly feared the Ark and refused to retain it. They sent for someone from Kirjath-jearim to take the Ark to a man called Abinadab, and the son of this man, Eleazar, watched over the Ark.

Samuel, who worked in the sanctuary in Shiloh before the Ark was stolen, encouraged the Israelites to dispose of their idols and return to their Creator. The calling was received and they cast away their idols, and now God could grant them victory over the Philistines. For some time after, the Philistines did not attack or enter the borders of Israel.

The Israelites again fell back into the practices of their heathen neighbours, and they demanded a king to rule over them instead of judges like Samuel had been. This was against God’s will, but never forcing anyone to comply with His wishes, He permitted them a king. Samuel anointed Saul first king of Israel, but Saul repeatedly rebelled against God’s will. After God had granted Saul several opportunities to repent, He told Samuel to crown another king in his place, but before King David could freely exercise his power, he had to endure many internal wars and great opposition. David was a descendant of the tribe of Judah and

greatly desired to follow the covenant that the Israelites had made with God.

David is most widely known for the songs he wrote, which were collected and largely contribute to, "The Book of the Psalms" in the Bible. When King David claimed "Jerusalem" and defeated the Jebusites, he decided to bring the Ark to his new city. The Ark had been under the careful watch of Abinadab for several years, but would now finally be reinstated into the sanctuary service as Moses had described. Thirty thousand men accompanied David as he journeyed to Abinadab's house to retrieve the Ark. Abinadab's two sons drove the carriage which the Ark had been placed on, while David and thousands of Israelites played music and rejoiced as they guided the Ark to its new home. But the rejoicing was silenced when one of the men, Uzzah, held out his hand and touched the Ark of the Covenant, dying instantly. This caused David to fear, and he did not dare to take it with him to the city of David. He decided to place it in the house of Obed-edom, a Gittite. God blessed Obed-edom and the whole family, because of their faithful care for the Ark. When all had heard how Obed-edom had been blessed for protecting the Ark, David regained his confidence in the whole affair. Three months after it had been placed with Obed-edom, David took the Ark of the Covenant to the city of David, Jerusalem. David danced and the whole house of Israel shouted for joy at this great event. The Ark was placed in a tabernacle similar to the tabernacle Moses erected in the wilderness, and finally reinstated into the sanctuary service.

David's heart yearned for the building of a magnificent temple for the Ark and the other temple furnishings, but through the prophet Nathan, David was given a message from God,

> "Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a taber nacle." (2 Samuel 7:5-6)

"I AM" once again made it known that His place on earth was with the Ark of the Covenant. This verse also tells us that the Ark had never been uncovered, and was always under the covering of a tent. David was not permitted to build the temple for God. He had fought many wars and his hands were too stained with blood to bear such a sacred obligation. So God let David know his son Solomon would build a house for Him, and for His Ark.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

King Solomon is most famous for the words of wisdom he wrote, as well as the temple he built. There is an entire book within the Bible called, "Proverbs", and another about the love between a bride and bridegroom called, "Song of Solomon". Solomon authored both of these as well as a book entitled, "Ecclesiastes". David had purchased the site upon which Solomon built this magnificent temple. David and his countrymen had at one time acted against the will of God, and God sent a pestilence across the country, "And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite" (2 Samuel 24:16). David was shown this angel standing ready to destroy the city, and as God halted the city's destruction, He instructed David through the prophet Gad to erect an altar there. The City of David was situated on a hill, and this angel had been standing on the mountain closest to David's palace, a mountain called Mount Moriah. So David bought this land that was then a threshing-place belonging to a man named Araunah. Here David constructed the altar where he sacrificed burnt offerings, and God removed the pestilence from the country.

So it was upon this same mountain that King Solomon constructed the temple several years later. Tens of thousands of Israelites participated in this project using wood from cedar and cypress trees imported all the way from

Top: The top of Mount Moriah, where Solomon's Temple was built.

Leftt: The Muslim sanctuary, The Dome of the Rock is now where Solomon's Temple once stood.

Lebanon. The foundation wall to the temple was made of stone quarried from Mount Moriah. It required eighty thousand men to quarry and shape the stones and seventy thousand to transport them to the site. Each stone was cut to size at the quarry to avoid unnecessary noise in the city. The temple was designed according to the same pattern as Moses' tabernacle with a courtyard, the Holy Place and the Most Holy where the Ark of the Covenant would be placed. The interior walls of the temple were constructed from cedar wood and the floor from the cypress tree.

> "And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen. And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar. So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold. And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high. And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size. The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub. And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. And he overlaid the cherubims with gold. And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without. And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. And for the enter ing of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall. The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cheru bims, and upon the palm trees. So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall. And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work. And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams." (1 Kings 6:18-36).

Solomon took seven whole years to complete the temple, and it was ready to house the Ark of the Covenant in the newly built Most Holy place. This was a

great event for the descendants of Jacob. It was not just the Ark that was carried from the City of David, but also the other temple furniture including the Table of Shewbread, the Seven Branched Lampstand and the Altar of Incense, in addition to the other holy tools and vessels.

> "And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above... There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD. Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever." (1 Kings 8:5-13).

Despite all the generations that had passed, and all the mysterious stories surrounding the Ark of the Covenant, Solomon still understood the true importance of the Ark. Concerning the Most Holy he just constructed, Solomon said,

> "And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt." (1 Kings 8:21).

In the courtyard of the temple in front of the whole congregation he solemnly prayed,

> "The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. And let these my

words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require: That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his comandments, as at this day." (1 Kings 8:57-61).

Solomon understood God's plan in making Israel a light to the world by following the only laws that could offer man health and happiness. His wisdom and rulership after the manner of God's commandments even became known in countries far from Israel. God's plan blossomed and the neighbouring countries respected Solomon and looked peacefully upon Israel. A famous example is when the Queen of Sheba journeyed from distant Africa to observe Solomon's "words of wisdom". After suffering many years of apostasy and internal strife amongst the Israelites, it appeared for a moment that "I AM's" plan would be finally and successfully executed. However, the whole plan depended on the condition that the people freely chose to co-operate with this covenant, and little time passed before idolatry crept back into their worship. God could only keep His promise to protect and care for them if they kept his covenant. If they did not, He could not prevent them from being defeated. God wanted to show them that He could not bless them if they chose to do evil. If God had blessed them, despite their evil, the world would think that God blessed and endorsed practices that in fact He despised. The world was to understand that God did not exercise favouritism, and if any man chose to do wrong then he had to accept the consequences of his decision, and not expect God to save them from the consequences of their own actions.

Contrary to God's advice, Solomon married many women that practiced idolatry. Consequently he was drawn away from God and even erected altars to venerate the idol gods in order to please his wives. Solomon became a poor example to the people, and it did not take long before idolatry and immorality once again became a part of daily life in Israel. All the time the Ark of the Covenant stood quietly in the background with the law and the covenant, where "I AM" had revealed Himself in a cloud. But the people had turned their backs on God's sanctuary, and on His plan. When Solomon's temple was destroyed several years later, the Ark of the Covenant and the other furniture in the temple had already disappeared and been hidden away from the Israelites.

THE COVENANT BROKEN

The apostasy

As Solomon grew old he did return to God, but his influence had already destroyed much for the country, and consequently the kingdom of Israel became divided. Those that remained loyal to Solomon's line only managed to claim the part of the kingdom that was under the tribe of Judah, one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Jeroboam, one of Solomon's servants, revolted against the king and later fled to Egypt. After Solomon died discord between his son and the people raged, and Jeroboam was pronounced king over ten of the tribes. The son of Solomon, Rehabeam, only ruled over the descendants of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. Israel was now divided in two, and the ten tribes were now called "Israel", while those of the tribe of Judah became known as the "Jews". Nevertheless they were still all descendants of Israel. Both Israel and Judah departed from the covenant that their ancestors had made with God. King Jeroboam erected golden calves to worship in order to discourage his people from attending Solomon's temple, now situated in the Jewish region.

Previously, the children of Israel had received writings that thoroughly explained the consequences of diverging from the path which God advised them to walk. These consequences were now beginning to manifest themselves throughout both Judah and Israel. Prophets were often called to try to appeal to the people to return to the ways of their God, in order that God could show them the solution to their problems. "I AM" had not forsaken them. One of the prophets He

sent was named Elijah, and according to 1 Kings, Elijah never passed through the grave. Instead he was taken straight to heaven in a fiery chariot. "I AM" gave both Elijah and his apprentice Elisha a gift that enabled them to heal the sick.

Baal statues from biblical times.

On one occasion Elijah gathered Israel on a mountain called Carmel. Elijah wanted to show the people who God was, and he declared,

> "...I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken." (1 Kings 18:22-24).

The prophets of the sun god wearied themselves all day crying to their gods, screaming and chanting, working themselves into a frenzy as they prophesied, but there was no fire. When they had finally given up, Elijah went forth to his offering and ordered the pouring of several buckets of water over the offering. He offered a simple, quiet prayer, but before he was even finished, fire burst from the heavens and consumed the sacrifice. No one could deny which God was more powerful, and for a time the people reformed themselves, but only a little time passed before both Israel and Judah again returned to idolatry and immorality. Israel and Judah were in constant conflict with neighbouring countries, and the land they had received in order that they be witnesses for God would soon be lost.

When Hezekiah, one of the kings of Judah, was visited by representatives of Babylon, he proudly and boastfully showed them all the treasures he possessed. A foolish thing to do in front of the world's fastest growing power. It did not

take long for Babylon to prepare to capture Jerusalem. The prospects were now morbid for a people who once enjoyed the expectation of becoming a great nation. Nevertheless, Judah had not seen her last God-fearing king.

Josiah and the book of the Covenant

Josiah was but a boy when he became king. He wished to follow the God of his ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. His desire for reform was turned into reality when one of the priests discovered the Book of the Law, also called the Book of the Covenant, in which Moses wrote God's covenant with the Israelites. Before Moses had ascended the mountain to receive the Tables of the Law, the Israelites had already promised to keep God's commandments. Moses had recorded the promise with the commandments they had promised to keep. This happened during the confirmation of the covenant between the Israelites and God, and the blood of a sacrificed animal confirmed this covenant. Later, at the border of the Promised Land and just before Moses died, he recorded the consequences of breaking this covenant, and the blessings, which would be granted if they kept the covenant. This book had disappeared for many years but when it was found, Shaphan the scribe read it aloud to King Josiah. Josiah was terrified as well as saddened when he learned the nature of the curses predicted upon the Israelites if they broke the covenant. They matched exactly to the curses that had already come upon them, and those that could be seen developing. He gathered together the entire population and the Book of the Covenant was read to the leaders, priests and common people alike. King Josiah renewed the covenant with God in front of the entire congregation, and began destroying every altar and temple dedicated to their idols. Under idolatry the people were indulging themselves in gross acts of sexual immorality and even prostitution. The children of Israel had degraded their minds so perversely that they commonly sacrificed their own children to these idols. Josiah banned these atrocities. The religion of the majority was that of sun worship intermingled with the worship of the true God, and ceremonies to venerate the sun god were performed directly outside Solomon's temple. They closed down the sacrificial system, which was intended to be carried out in God's temple, and the Ark of the Covenant had been removed under this apostasy. Several of the previous Kings of Judah were guilty of erecting great statues of sun gods with their altars and various other things that were dedicated to this false god.

"And he took away the horses that the Kings of Judah had given to the

> sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the Kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men. Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove."
> (2 Kings 23:11-15).

Then Josiah re-established the Passover which "I AM" had given the Israelites through Moses prior to their exodus from Egypt. The very last time the Bible reveals the location of the Ark of the Covenant is here under the reformation of King Josiah. He called upon the Levites who had taken care of the Ark during this period of darkness for Israel,

> "Put the holy Ark in the house which Solomon, the son of David king of Israel did build." (2 Chronicles 35:3)

JERUSALEM UNDER SIEGE

Jeremiah
King Josiah was king in Judah for thirty-one years. In spite of his enormous efforts to reform his people, their condition soon deteriorated and sun worship reappeared. During his eighteenth year as king, Josiah called for the Ark of the Covenant to be returned to Solomon's temple. Just thirty-five years later this temple lay in ruins.

Zedekiah, Josiah's grandson, received an offer from Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar proposed that if Zedekiah surrendered his authority to him, Zedekiah could reign as king instead of his brother, and the people could live in peace. Zedekiah accepted this arrangement and Nebuchadnezzar made him king, but later Zedekiah broke this agreement and as a result, Jerusalem was invaded, destroyed, and left in ruins.

The Babylonians constructed a siege wall surrounding the entire city, long before they actually invaded. The desired effect was that none could enter or leave Jerusalem. Starvation spread and death ravaged the city. The Jews were accustomed to burying their dead outside the city wall, but now even this was impossible and disease raged within the city.

Before Jerusalem was destroyed, God raised up a young prophet named Jeremiah to inform the people what must be done to avoid a great slaughter when the Babylonians finally invaded their city. Jeremiah, who wrote the books of Jer-

emiah and Lamentations in the Bible, advised the people to surrender to Babylon. He advised Zedekiah repeatedly to honour the agreement he had made with Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. The people believed they were specially chosen of God, so God would not permit them to be destroyed and they refused to take heed to Jeremiah. They forgot that God's promises of protection had been granted on condition of obedience to His Ten Commandments. Even the high priests who enjoyed enormous respect maintained that Jeremiah was a false prophet. They preached that no disaster would come upon them, and that the Babylonians would never succeed in taking their city.

The religious leaders had gained the people's confidence, and it was easier for the people to believe them than Jeremiah's message of judgement. As they were not listening, God instructed Jeremiah to use physical objects to preach the message. On one occasion he was told to purchase a clay pot and smash it in front of the leaders and tell them plainly that this would happen to them if they did not repent. Another time God showed Jeremiah a potter who was moulding an earthen vessel and the message herein was that God wanted to mould his people in the same way. Again and again Jeremiah attempted to deliver God's warnings not to defy the Babylonians, but they only laughed at him. The people placed such great confidence in the religious leaders and false prophets who promised peace and safety, that God declared,

> "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm...Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you" "...I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." (Jeremiah 17:59 & 23:16-22)

"I AM" still wanted to forgive and heal this doomed nation. He asked Jeremiah to record all He had revealed to him concerning what was to happen,

> "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose

> to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book." (Jeremiah 36:3-4).

But God was again rejected, and all hope of saving His people was greatly marred when King Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, ripped the scroll in pieces and threw it on the fire, after only three or four columns had been read to him. Both Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah disappeared into hiding after the king issued a warrant for their arrest. Jeremiah was imprisoned several times during his ministry, for warning the people of God's judgments. Nevertheless God continued to appeal to King Jehoiakim and his son Zedekiah to submit to the king of Babylon, but all was in vain as they hardened their hearts and refused. Eventually the Babylonians captured Zedekiah, murdered his sons before his very eyes, then blinded him and took him captive to Babylon.

The people continued in their sun worship until Jerusalem was finally taken. Their leaders bowed down upon their knees outside Solomon's temple, with their back to the Most Holy and the Ark of the Covenant with the tables of the law inside, and worshiped the sun that rose from the east. Jeremiah mentions the Ark for the last time in the book of Jeremiah,

> "And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more." (Jeremiah 3:16).

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT DISAPPEARED

In the year 586BC Jerusalem and her magnificent temple lay in ruins. Both the King's House and the LORD'S House were burned and the walls of Jerusalem torn down, while the remainder of the people were taken prisoner to Babylon. The vast array of treasures and other valuables from Solomon's temple were looted. The bronze pillars, wagons and the bronze sea from the temple were broken in pieces and stolen. They took the vessels for the ashes, the tools to work the fire, the incense bowls and all the bronze tools that had been used in the sanctuary service,

> "And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away. The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight." (2 Kings 25:15-16)

The Book of Ezra tells us that everything that was taken to Babylon from the House of the Lord was returned 70 years later. The Ark however, was neither carried away nor returned. The Ark of the Covenant, the Seven Branched Lampstand, the Table of Shewbread and the Altar of Incense had already disappeared from the temple before the Babylonians invaded, despite the fact that King Josiah, just thirty-five years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, had

placed them in the temple. Not only had the Ark disappeared from the biblical account, but also from the Israelites, just as Jeremiah prophesied. When the Jews returned from captivity and rebuilt a new temple, they were told through the prophet Ezekiel to make new furniture for the temple, but they were not required to build a new Ark of the Covenant.

Swallowed by the earth

There are several ancient, Jewish historical accounts that are not included in the Bible. Although not all are widely considered inspired by God, many can still be counted as subjective historical material. In the book "The Ark of the Covenant" by Roderick Grierson and Stuart Munro-Hay they describe a section from Baruch's second book, written long after the destruction of the first temple.

> "The episode begins as the Babylonian army approaches Jerusalem. Baruch, the servant of Jeremiah, is sitting alone beside an oak tree, lamenting the faith of Zion. As he imagines the suffering that the people of Jerusalem will be forced to endure in captivity, a spirit lifts him into the air and carries him above the walls of the city. He sees four angels standing at the four corners of the city, each of them holding a burning torch in his hand. Another angel comes down from heaven and tells them not to destroy the city before he gives the word. He has been sent by God to hide something in the earth. Baruch then sees the angel descend into the inner sanctuary of the Temple and take the veil, the holy ephod, the mercy seat, the two Tables of the Law, the vestments of the priests, the altar of incense, the forty-eight precious stones with which the priests were clothed, and all the holy vessels of the taber nacle. The angel then speaks in a loud voice, calling on the earth to hear the word of God and receive the things that the angel will entrust to it. The earth should guard them until the last times, so that strangers will never find them, and it should restore them at the end of time. God has decided that Jerusalem will be delivered to the enemy, until the time in which it will be restored forever. The earth then opens its mouth and swallows the holy treasures."

In the same book, the authors describe another account from the second century,

> "Jeremiah asks God if he might speak, and when he is given permission,

> he says that he realises the city is about to be surrendered to its enemies, and the people carried into exile, but he wants to know what God expects him to do with the holy vessels in the Temple. God tells him to take them and entrust them to the earth, ordering it to listen to the com mands of the God who made it… It should guard the vessels of the Temple until the arrival of ´the beloved one`. Jeremiah and Baruch then enter the sanctuary, and after they have collected the holy vessels, they deliver them to the earth as God has instructed. Immediately, the earth swallows them, and the two men sit down and weep." (Grierson/Munro-Hay, "The Ark of the Covenant", 2000, page 117-118).

There are several different stories and records concerning the fate of the Ark. They are somewhat diverse from one another, so that all cannot be true, if indeed any are at all. Most of the accounts were written long after the Ark disappeared, and are for the most part based upon legend. It is highly probable that Jeremiah was involved in the disappearance of this gold-covered Ark. The most likely explanation as to what took place is found in another non-biblical source. In the apocryphal book, 2 Maccabees 2:2-8, it is written,

> "The records show that it was Jeremiah who… prompted by a divine message, the prophet gave orders that the Tent of Meeting and the Ark should go with them. Then he went to the mountain from the top of which Moses saw God's promised land. When he reached the mountain, Jeremiah found a cave dwelling; he carried the tent, the Ark, and the incense altar into it, then blocked up the entrance. Some of his compani ans came to mark out the way, but were unable to find it. When Jer emiah learned of this he reprimanded them. 'The place shall remain unknown', he said, 'until God finally gathers His people together and shows mercy to them. Then the Lord will bring these things to light again, and the glory of the Lord will appear with the cloud, as it was seen both in the time of Moses, and when Solomon prayed that the shrine might be worthily consecrated".

The author of this letter explains from where he got this information, "These same facts are set out in the official records and in the memoirs of Nehemiah. Just as Nehemiah collected the chronicles of the kings, the writings of prophets, the works of David, and royal letters about sacred offerings, to found his library, so Judas also has collected all the books that had been scattered as a result of

our recent conflict. These are in our possession, and if you need any of them, send messengers for them." (2 Maccabees 2:13-15). Although this book cannot be considered one hundred percent accurate, it does offer yet another historical record that it was Jeremiah who hid the Ark before the Babylonians destroyed the temple.

The mystery of the Ark

The mystery surrounding the Ark of the Covenant became legendary among all nations. Many believed that it had super-power, and any army that carried it with them to battle would be victorious. The Bible however, plainly states that this was not the case, and that the Ark had no power of its own, but that it was God who blessed the nation of Israel in battle. The Ark simply represented His presence with them. The nation that stole the Ark experienced plagues and a great loss of life until they returned it, all of which made a lasting impression upon the people. When over fifty thousand men in Bethshemesh were killed when they looked into the Ark, even the Israelites began to fear it. The Bible reveals that it was God who let this happen when an offence was committed under the requirements of the Ark. Thus it was not the Ark itself which possessed this power, but God who protected it. So why was it so important for God to protect His Ark? What did it mean and what relevance did it have to man?

Only once a year during the sanctuary service was the high priest permitted to enter the Most Holy where the Ark was situated. Each time he was to bring with him the blood from a sacrificed animal that was to be sprinkled on the Mercy Seat. The Mercy Seat being the lid over the Ark, where the Ten Commandments were kept. The rest of the year he was not allowed to enter the Most Holy, so ordinarily when an animal was sacrificed, the priest would only enter as far as the Holy and just sprinkle the blood in the direction of the Ark. The Ark also had a supernatural aspect to it, in that "I AM", or the LORD, sometimes revealed His presence in a cloud above the Ark. When the Jews returned from Babylon after seventy years of captivity, and they wanted to serve God again, they erected a new temple to perform the "blood-sprinkling", or sacrificial ceremonies. But God never restored the Ark to them again, it was still hidden. Why did God not return the Ark to them when He saw that they had repented and wanted to resume the service they had been instructed to perform by Moses? Was not this the purpose of the Ark of the Covenant? Why then did they not have it restored to them? Perhaps now the Ark had a greater purpose to fulfil?

Part 2
THE DISCOVERY

"For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad."

Luke 8:17

Part II: The Discovery, is written with H.M.Trangerud according to the testimonies of Ron Wyatt recorded on videotape 1997/98, from W.A.R's presentation video and from W.A.R's newsletter.

RON'S STUDIES

When Ron Wyatt returned to America after his unusual experience in Jerusalem, he studied the Bible closely, noting the last time the Ark's location was mentioned. He discovered it was when King Josiah of Judah wanted to reform the country,

> "Moreover Josiah kept a Passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month... And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the Lord, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel... In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this Passover kept." (2 Chronicles 35:1,3,19).

This happened in the year 621BC, thirty-five years before Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem in 586BC. The temple was completely destroyed, and there was nothing indicating that the Ark had been removed before that time. Ron noticed several places in the Bible that gave detailed descriptions of the items that the Babylonians took from the king's house and the temple (see 2Kings 24:13 & 25:13-18. Jeremiah 52:17-23). To his surprise, the lists included spoons and other smaller objects that were used in the temple service, but the most valuable and most significant of all the temple furniture, the Ark of the Covenant, was not mentioned. He also found that the sacred

object was not mentioned as any of the items returned from Babylon. It suggested that the Ark was not taken to Babylon, so it had to have been removed from the temple between year 621BC and 586BC.

The siege wall

As mentioned, the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem before invading it, and constructed a siege wall around the city,

> "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it: and they built forts against it round about. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah." (2 Kings 25:1-2).

This siege lasted over a year before the city was finally invaded. So Ron started to study more about the siege wall. In order to have the desired effect, the siege wall had to completely surround the city, so that delivery of all necessary supplies to its inhabitants was prevented. It was this starvation that weakened Jerusalem enough to allow Nebuchadnezzar to eventually invade,

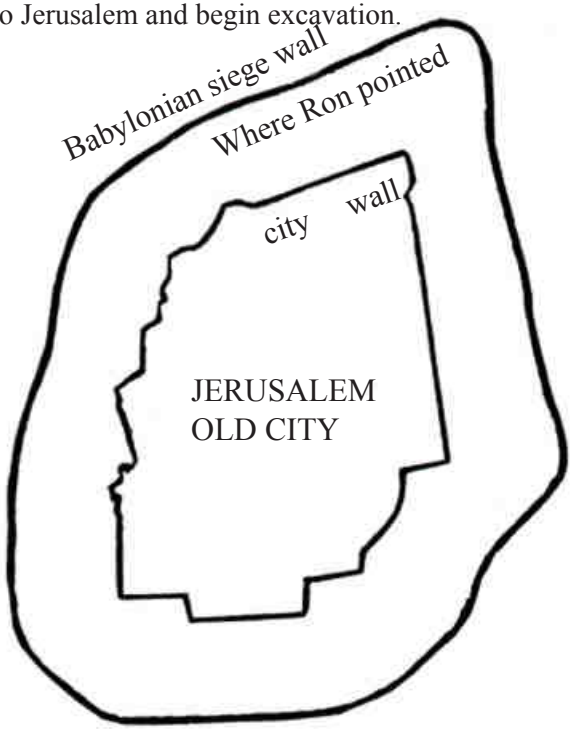
> "And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which are by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him." (2 Kings 25:3-5).

Another important reason for a siege wall was to protect the attacking army. Thus the walls had to be situated enough distance away from the city so that the inhabitants were prevented from firing at the enemy. Over one hundred years before the destruction of Jerusalem, Uzziah was king in Judah. He had greatly strengthened Jerusalem's defences, "And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented

by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal." (2 Chronicles 26:14-15).

Such catapults were able to reach over three hundred meters. "Behold… the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls" (Jeremiah 21:4).

So the Babylonian siege wall had to be placed beyond their three hundred meter range. The results of Ron Wyatt's study led him to several conclusions. The Ark of the Covenant could not have been taken to Babylon, according to biblical references. It must have been hidden sometime between 621BC (King Josiah's 18th year of reign) and 586BC, when the Babylonians invaded the city and the temple was looted. Finally, the Ark must have been hidden within the Babylonian siege wall as no one from Jerusalem could travel past it. Since Jerusalem had been totally destroyed it was highly unlikely that the Ark was hidden within the city walls. All these points matched perfectly with the area Ron Wyatt had pointed to and identified as being Jeremiah's grotto. The place was outside the city wall, but still within the siege wall. This was enough for him to decide to return to Jerusalem and begin excavation.



THE EXCAVATION BEGINS

New permit to excavate

When Ron decided to dig for the Ark of the Covenant at the site he had pointed to, he soon discovered that it was not as easy to obtain a permit as he first thought. The man from Antiquities, who had promised Ron written permission, was unable to do so. Ron had studied archaeology and worked at various archaeological sites for many years, but he was not a professional archaeologist. This made the whole situation even more difficult. Ron submitted a new application for a permit to excavate and waited three long weeks. In the meantime Ron and his small team travelled to the west coast of Israel to Ashkelon to relax. While they swam in the sea, Ron kicked something in the water. When he looked to see what it was, he found a large, ancient stone pot, and on further exploration of the area they discovered several more of these jars. Each was carefully sealed which had kept their contents intact. Breaking open one of the jars to find out what was so carefully preserved, they found the remains of human bones. They were clearly ancient burial pots. Ron immediately delivered them to the Department of Antiquities and they were greatly enthused when they identified them as Canaanite burial pots. Another archaeologist had previously searched the entire beach trying to locate the burial ground of these ancient people, but without success. No one ever thought of looking only a few meters out to sea. To Ron these findings were not as significant as the other discoveries he had worked with, but as a result of this find he was immediately granted a permit to excavate in Jerusalem.

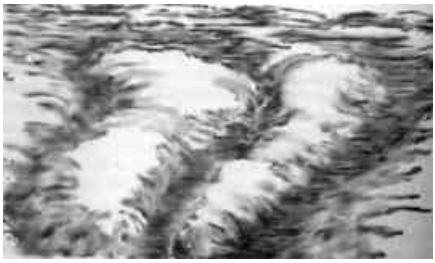


Illustration of the two mountains Jerusalem is built on. Mount Sion is to the left and Mount Moriah to the right.

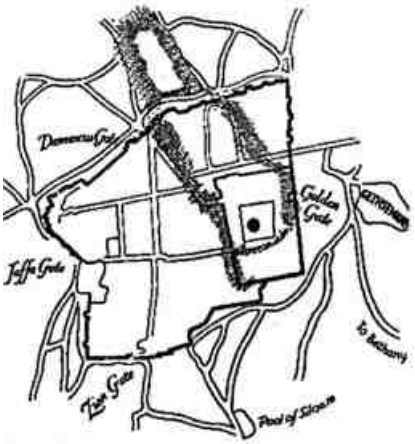
The excavation site

The three most famous mountains in the Jerusalem area are Sion, Moriah and that which is now known as the Mount of Olives. Although the city itself is built on both Mount Sion and Mount Moriah, the city is usually referred to in the Bible as just, "Sion". Mount Moriah was the place where David erected an altar after seeing the angel standing ready to destroy the city, and the same site which Solomon built the temple on. According to Genesis there was another significant, historical event that took place here upon Mount Moriah.

It is possible that Abraham believed his son Isaac was the son of the promise who was going to be sacrificed for all mankind, and in obedience, and in certainty that God could raise him up again from death, Abraham journeyed to this special place on Mount Moriah to sacrifice his son. But just as Abraham was about to sacrifice his son Isaac, God sent an angel to stop him. Just then Abraham was shown a ram, which was trapped in a thicket (a crown of thorns), and he was told to sacrifice this instead of his son. Today the Dome of the Rock stands at this site where the first and second temples once stood, and where Abraham had erected an altar in order to sacrifice his son. With great relief Abraham discovered that it was not his son that was chosen to die for mankind, and furthermore he was told that it will be upon this same mountain, Mount Moriah, that God will provide the true Sacrifice,

> "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen/provided." (Genesis 22:14).

On the east, the south and the western side of Jerusalem there are deep valleys, which provided excellent protection to the city against attack. The north part of



To the left: Mount Moriah. The Golgotha escarpment is marked out with a circle. The thinner black line shows the city wall.

the city on the other hand, was very vulnerable. A dry moat was cut through Mount Moriah on this northern side to prevent enemies from gaining an advantage by attacking the wall at ground level. This moat was also used as a stone quarry and the first book of Kings tells us that Solomon used stones from a stone quarry to build the First Temple - very probably the same stone quarry in Mount Moriah. The northern part of Mount Moriah, which is now separated from the city and the rest of the mountain, is now known to many as the Calvary Escarpment. It was this site that Ron had unexpectedly pointed to and identified as Jeremiah's grotto, and here he would begin to dig.

Over the years Jerusalem had been destroyed and restored many times. It was usual to build the new city upon the remains of the old one. The result being that today we find remains of several cities, one on top of the other. So to locate the original ground level at this site at Mount Moriah, Ron had to dig straight down into the ground by the side of the cliff face.

First problem

It was January 1979, and there had been some snowfall in the area that year which had turned to slush. In addition to this, the site was filled with trash, and gave off a terrible stench, which made starting the work there very uncomfortable. It did not take long before Ron also discovered that the site had an enormous, underground rock protruding out from the mountain making it difficult

to dig straight down. There were only three on the team at that time, Ron and his two sons Danny and Ronny who had accompanied Ron on several archaeological trips before. As a result of the large rock obstructing them from digging straight down, they decided to start digging several meters to the right.

THE GOLGOTHA ESCARPMENT

The skull shape on the escarpment and the location of the site, has led many to wonder if this detached section of Mount Moriah could have been the place where Jesus of Nazareth, probably the most widely known figure in all history, was crucified. The crucifixion site was outside the city walls and was called, "The Place of the Skull" or, "Golgotha" (Matthew 27:33). Even today the huge form of a skull can be seen on the southern face of the escarpment, although the cliff face gained little interest before the 18th century. Otto Thenius, a German, came to the conclusion in 1842, that this was the crucifixion site. "There were also several American visitors around that time who came to a similar conclusion: Rufus Anderson (1845), Fisher Howe (1853), Charles Robinson (1867) and Selah Merill (1845), with the Englishman Henry Tristam (1858) and the famous Frenchman Ernest Renan, author of Vie de Jèsus (1863)." (The Week-

The oldest known map picturing Jerusalem was found in a church in Madaba, Jordan. The Damascus Gate can be seen to the left of the map. The Antonia fortress can be seen towards the top in the middle of the map.

end That Changed the World. Peter Walker, 1999, page 113).

This escarpment is situated adjacent to a main road that was present in Jesus' day. An ancient Byzantine map clearly shows that Damascus Gate was the main gate, by which the main road led out of Jerusalem's old city. The road between Damascus Gate and the quarried off section of Mount Moriah was a highway to the large cities in the time of Jesus. Quintillion*, a Roman writer recorded, "Whenever we crucify criminals, very crowded highways are chosen, so that many may see it and may be moved by fear of it, because all punishment does not pertain so much to revenge as to example".

Besides crucifixion, another form of execution was stoning, and both methods would be carried out in the same area. Claude Conder, a young British man was sent to design a topographical survey map of Palestine in 1872. His interest in this site was aroused when he studied the research of Thomes Chaplin. The Sephardic Jews identified this cliff-face as a stoning ground, as did The Mishnah (Sanhedrin 6:1-4), a collection of old rabbinic writings - something that positively revealed this as a site of crucifixion in the time of Jesus.

There are many evidences that suggest this site is the site of Jesus' execution. The story of Abraham earlier mentioned, is also interesting in this matter. Abraham was standing upon this very same Mount Moriah, willing to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command, ["And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen/provided." (Genesis 22:14)]. A prophecy that indicates that it would be here on Mount Moriah that God would "provide" the sacrifice of the true "sacrificial Lamb", the promised Messiah. As this cliff is part of Mount Moriah, it is yet another indication that this might well be the site of the crucifixion.

The Tomb of Jesus

Concerning the site of the crucifixion it is written,

**Quintillion: (c.AD 35) Marcus Fabius Quintilianus. Latin teacher and writer whose work on rhetoric, Institutio oratoria, is a major contribution to educational theory and literary criticism. Quintillion was born in Spain, but was educated in Rome, where he subsequently received some practical training from the leading orator of the day, Domitius Afer. (The New Encyclopædia Britannica, volume 10, 15th edition, 1997, USA)*

> "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid" (John 19:41).

This tomb belonged to a rich man named Joseph who donated it to Jesus at His death. Since the place of the crucifixion now seemed so obvious, according to the Bible, the tomb should also be located in a garden in the vicinity.

Indeed there is a tomb, discovered in 1857, sculptured out of the west side of the escarpment and approximately two hundred metres from the skull face. Luke, one of the disciples of Jesus, recorded how it was "a sepulchre that was hewn in stone..." (Luke 23:53). This description matched with the tomb discovered in the garden. It took some years after 1857 before interest in this tomb grew. The Englishman, General Gordon was also sure this was the tomb of Christ. Not only was it close to the Skull Hill, but also in an old garden. An application from England was submitted to purchase the area, and is still to this day owned and run by an English Association. Many refer to the escarpment as "Gordon's Calvary", because of General Gordon's public endorsement of the site. The tomb had a trough by the entrance, which was designed to hold a huge rolling stone. This also agrees with the Bible's description of the tomb. Mark, another of Jesus' disciples, wrote the following,

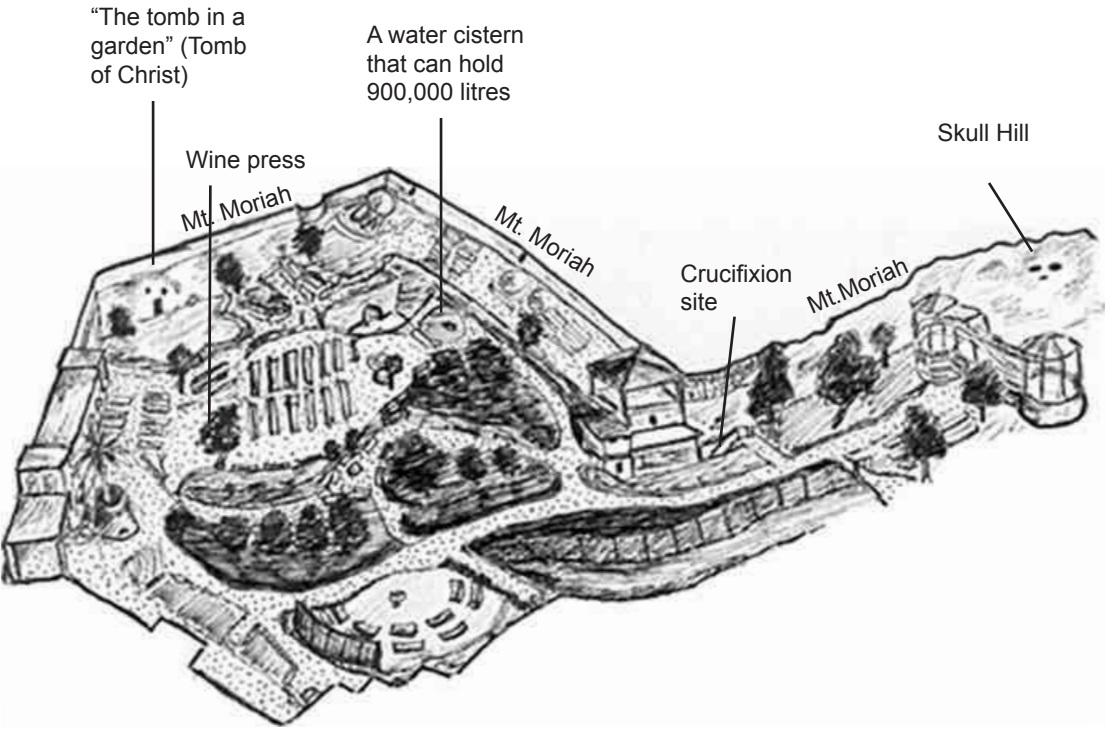
> "...and laid Him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre" (Mark 15:46).

Evidently the tomb was in a garden during the time of Jesus, as several water cisterns were discovered there. The largest of which holds about nine hundred thousand litres. In 1942 an ancient winepress was discovered, cut into the ground of the Garden Tomb area, showing that there was once a vineyard here.

Ron was now digging in an area between the skull shaped escarpment and the tomb.

The niches

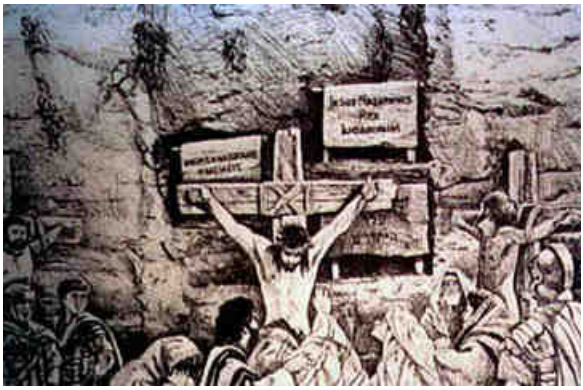
Ron and his two sons began by digging straight down the cliff face. It was an enormous task, which required them to move several tonnes of rock, earth and stone. At the same time they had to follow the requirements of the Department



of Antiquities, which involved sifting through all the debris in order not to miss any artefacts. As they dug down, Ron found three niches like shelves that were cut into the cliff-face. Archaeologists had previously discovered similar Roman niches, so Ron immediately knew their purpose. In Roman times it was not unusual for niches like this to hold large signs. Such signs were made from wooden boards and covered with gypsum, and upon them were written notices in large letters. When the notice was no longer current, the boards were whitewashed so a new notice could be posted.* All together Ron found a grouping of three niches. As these niches were cut into the cliff-face of what was believed

** Ancient scrolls, 1994 Palphot, Israel, Michael Avi-Yonah*

to be the Calvary escarpment, Ron knew it was extremely likely that they held signs, which stated the crime of the criminal being executed.



Jesus had been executed in a typically Roman fashion and Ron remembered that the Bible tells us the accusations against Jesus were written in three different languages. So Ron wondered if perhaps the signs falsely condemning Christ were also displayed in niches like these.

When a person was sentenced to crucifixion he was first whipped. After being forced to carry the cross to the crucifixion site he was nailed or tied to it, where it was then held upright in the ground in a cross-hole. This was the typical Roman method of crucifixion, and was the treatment that Jesus would have had to endure.

> "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin." (John 19:19-20).

It has become common to show Jesus on the cross with a small sign nailed to the cross above His head. This understanding was built more upon artists' perceptions of the scene, rather than on what was practical. In the first place the crucifixion was supposed to be a fearsome deterrent. The description of the crime was therefore displayed clearly, so that all who passed by could see it. A small sign would be too small, and when we remember that the "accusation" was written in the three common languages of the time, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, it all points to Pilate having written the notice on three different signs, placed in

niches in the cliff-face.

We can be sure that the signs could well have been as large as the niches, as many of the Jews were able to read them even from afar. Jesus was crucified close to the city, and as it was the Passover, many of the Jews were hurrying to Jerusalem. The Jewish high priests reacted strongly when reading them and approached Pilate protesting,

> "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written." (John 19:21-22).

So there is little doubt that the signs Pilate posted attracted great attention.

However, it may seem that John, an eyewitness to the entire event, said the sign was attached to the cross. In the Bible we read, "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross." (John 19:19) The word here translated "on" is the Greek word "epi", which can also mean "above" or "over". We find exactly the same word used in the Gospel of Matthew, but here it has been translated "over". "And set up over (epi) his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." (Matthew 27:37). Obviously "epi" could not have been translated as "on" here! Also in other places in the Bible "epi" is translated as "over", and it is therefore not necessary for the inscription to be "on" the cross in order to agree with Scripture. The only thing we know with certainty is that the inscriptions were placed over, or above the cross, as it specifies in The Gospel of Matthew.

Ron Wyatt strongly suspected that the three niches he had uncovered were used to hold the Roman signs indicating the crime of the crucified. So he placed written poster-boards in them to demonstrate the function of the niches, but little did he know how his conclusions would soon be confirmed.

THE CRUCIFIXION SITE

The cistern

The walls of the shaft they were digging began to look unstable so Ron decided to terminate his work by the niches and begin excavating at the site he had originally pointed to. He found there was enough room to dig behind the large stone that was previously a hindrance, thus he began to excavate between the stone and the cliff wall. Where they first started to dig, the cliff face sunk vertically down into the ground like a wall. Here on the other hand, it dropped at an angle, so Ron had a "ceiling" protecting him made by the overhanging cliff face.

About eleven and a half meters below present day ground level they hit bedrock. After carefully removing the debris, they found a round, hewn chamber with a diameter of approximately four and a half meters. Spiral steps ascended one wall, and higher up a hole had been cut out. A hole that could hold a rope, and evidence that the chamber must at one time have been converted to a cistern. The hole would have held the rope, which carried a bucket to collect water, or perhaps grain from the shaft.

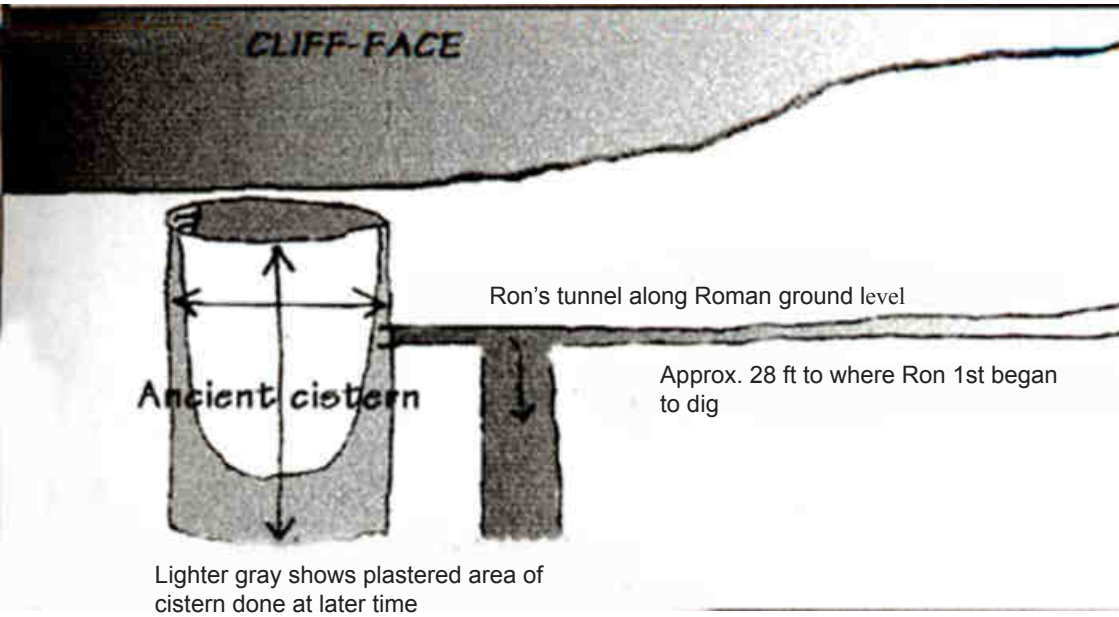
When Ron chiselled through the plastering used as filling to form the cistern, he found several potsherds, which he delivered to two antique shops for assessment. There they informed him that some dated to the time of the Jebusites, before David took Sion and declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel, but the latest samples were from the Roman period. Thus the chamber had been plastered and converted during the Roman era.

The stoning site

From the presence of potsherds and coins, they could also identify Roman ground level. At this point they began to dig a tunnel horizontally along the cliff wall, towards the site where they had first dug. The purpose being to find an entrance into a cave or tunnel that extended into the underground cliff face, but what they in fact found was sinister evidence of the cruelty that had once taken place there.

About a meter from the edge of the cistern the bedrock ended. By digging straight down about a meter, Ron found several stones the size of a fist, and among them he found human bones, particularly finger bones. The many unusual stones and scattered bones showed clearly that this was not a grave, and Ron's conclusion was that this could have been the stoning site referred to in Acts chapter seven, where we read about the stoning of Stephen,

> "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him." (Acts 7:57-58).


CLIFF-FACE
Ron's tunnel along Roman ground level
Approx. 28 ft to where Ron 1st began to dig
Ancient cistern
Lighter gray shows plastered area of cistern done at later time

The cross holes

Ron continued to tunnel towards the first excavation site when he came across the foundation of an ancient building, parallel to the cliff face. A stone protruding from one of the walls was worn and smooth and looked like an altar stone. Someone could have used this as a memorial, but a memorial to what?

Just in front of the horizontal altar stone Ron noticed a large stone lying on the rock floor. As he looked closer he noticed it was covered with travertine*. It was so unusual and so symmetrical that it had to have been cut by man, and Ron lifted the stone for a closer inspection. As he lifted it, to his surprise he discovered it was covering a square hole chiselled into the bedrock.

The place seemed to have been untouched for several years, and as a result there was a great deal of dirt and debris lying around the hole. When Ron removed it, he saw a crack in the ground extending through the bedrock. A platform, like a ledge, extended two and a half meters out from the cliff face and it was on this ledge that the first square hole was chiselled. As Ron uncovered more of the area in front of this ledge he found another three square holes chiselled into the rock floor in the same manner as the first. The sides of the holes being approximately thirty to thirty-three centimetres.

Ron's measurements showed that the first hole with the crack was 4.2 meters directly below the three niches. His earlier theory that these niches could have been used to hold signs describing the nature of the crime was now confirmed by these square holes.

They were clearly cross-holes. The circumstances that led Ron to start digging here and his trust in God's leading, made him realise that one of these holes, could well have held the cross of Christ, but it was not this alone that led Ron to his conclusion.

*Travertine : Dene, banded rock composed of calcite (calcium carbonate CaCO3). It also occurs in limestone caves in the form of stalactites and stalagmites. (The New Encyclopædia Britannica, volume 11, 15th edition, 1997, USA)

The foundation of the structure indicated that it had covered the whole area at one point in time. Could the early Christians have erected a building here in memory of what had happened?

The crack from one of the lower cross-holes was a typical earthquake crack. It had no marks identifying the use of hammer or chisel, and had to have been natural. Matthew, a disciple of Jesus, tells us that there was an earthquake as Jesus hung on the cross, "...and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;" (Matthew 27:51). The cross hole cut into the rock floor and the earthquake crack extending from it is evidence that the rocks really must have been "rent" just as Matthew describes.

The cross hole itself was fifty-nine centimetres deep. The crack from the cross hole ran even deeper, but Ron did not clean out the crack in order to measure it's depth at this point. Over a year later he discovered that it travelled approximately six meters straight down into the ground.

Dating the building

Ron and his team found coins, which made it possible to date the building. One of the coins had Tiberius' inscription on it, Emperor from 14AD to 37AD. They did not find coins from any earlier than this, but they found coins dating to the year 135AD. From this evidence, Ron knew the building was erected between the time of the crucifixion and the year 135AD. The place was probably built after general Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD. From the time Jesus was crucified to when the city was conquered seventy years later, this crucifixion site was probably still being used. In the book, "Wars of the Jews", Book V, Chapter XI, paragraph 1 by Josephus, we read that as many as five hundred men were crucified every day during Titus' siege of Jerusalem. This would have made it almost impossible for the Christians to construct any such memorial by the site of the crucifixion.

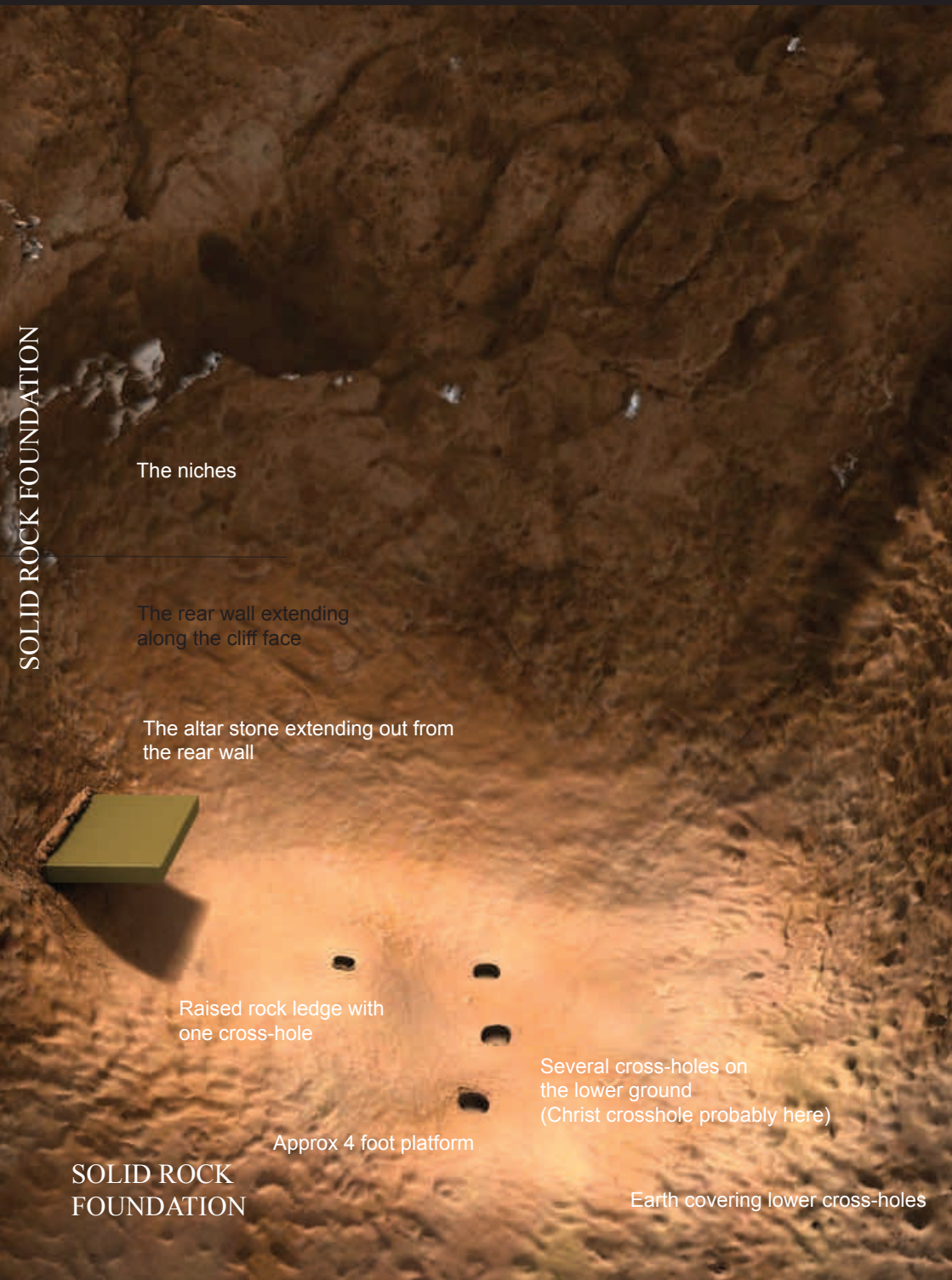
When Jerusalem was totally destroyed by the Romans in 70AD, mass crucifixion came to an end, and most of the Jews were either killed or sold as slaves. The city which was so magnificent, but after having experienced it's second complete destruction, was now reduced to a Roman encampment.

The second temple, which had been built on the same site as Solomon's temple,

was now in total ruin and the golden furniture had all been stolen. An eight hundred strong Roman garrison was stationed in the camp to ensure no one attempted to rebuild the city again.

The Christians had survived the destruction of Jerusalem, as they had been warned by Jesus exactly when to leave the city. While Jesus was alive He told them the city was to be destroyed, and gave them a sign indicating when to flee and avoid being killed by the invading army. When the Roman Emperor Hadrian arrived in the year 130AD to rebuild the city, he showed favour towards the Christians. The Jews however, were not allowed to set foot in the city. The Emperor named the new city he had built "Aelia Capitolina". The Jews who returned to Judea revolted against him, resulting in the loss of the lives of half a million Jewish men.

As the latest coin found by the building was dated 135 it was possible that the Christians recognised their chance to erect this building after the destruction of Jerusalem when Christianity was tolerated, and they were allowed access to these areas by the Romans. The absence of any coins dating later then 135 indicates that the site must have been abandoned after 135. The condition of the remains of the building indicated that it was not destroyed, but just abandoned and had therefore deteriorated naturally. As the years passed, the area became covered by earth and debris.


SOLID ROCK FOUNDATION
The niches
The rear wall extending along the cliff face
The altar stone extending out from the rear wall
Raised rock ledge with one cross-hole
Several cross-holes on the lower ground (Christ crosshole probably here)
Approx 4 foot platform
SOLID ROCK FOUNDATION
Earth covering lower cross-holes

A LARGE CAVE SYSTEM

Almost two years had passed since Ron and his two sons began excavating, and still they had not found any cave system or hidden tunnels. Although Ron had found several artefacts of great significance, they were not what he was searching for. He was searching for the Ark of the Covenant. The work was now drawing to a standstill, and Ron was at a loss as to how he should continue with the excavation.

Ron relates, “I was impressed to break right through the cliff, not this cliff (Ron points to the cliff he is standing next to) but one that looked every bit as solid… So anyway, I kept looking around for a place to get in that cliff. I knew there were caves in there because honey bees were coming out of cracks, and flying in. So they had their nests in there.

So anyway, my youngest son, he says, “Dad, have you prayed about this?”, and I said, “Yes”. You know I should have prayed with my sons. We look back and we see mistakes we’ve made, but he asked. And we did pray together at night and morning, but I should have prayed right there. Anyway, he said, “Did you pray about this?” I said, “Yes”. He said, “Well, did you get any indication of what to do?”. I said, “Yes. I’m supposed to break right through that cliff”. And he says, “Well let’s do it”. And I said, “No way! That’s stupid! I’m not doing it.”

So we worked for three or four more days and it was time to leave the next day, and my older son was down with me and we were handing the tools up to

my youngest son to store them, and my older son is rather a quiet person. He said, “Dad, did you pray about this?” I said, “Sure, yes I did.” He said, “Well?” I said, “I was impressed to break through that cliff right there.” And he said, “Well, let’s do it”. And I said, “No! That’s stupid! I am not beating my brains out against a cliff!” He said, “Well, Dad, pardon my saying so, but I’ve seen you do stupider things than that!” I said, “OK. Tell Ronny to pass the tools back down.”

Now if you’ll look carefully you’ll see a crack right here. It’s not much of one but it is a fault line through that stone. So we went 18 inches over to this side, took our hammers and chisels and started marking the stone up and down, and up and down. Finally a big chunk popped out of there. We pushed it off to the side, looked back in the bottom. There was a small dark hole about that big (Ron indicates a small hole with his fingers). It didn’t look very promising at all.

I had my son hand me the flashlight, we had had them sitting where they could see. This was all down in a tunnel. And so I put it up to that hole and there was a big cave chamber back behind there. Have you ever had goose bumps and all of that sort of thing just, overwhelm you? Well, that’s what happened to me. It didn’t take us very long to make the hole big enough to get in.

I thought the Ark of the Covenant would be sitting right there. It wasn’t... So, since we had to leave the next morning, we plugged that hole. We came back to the surface, plugged the hole. Fixed everything up so nobody could tell where we had been, and left. I had to go home and work and save up some more money and come back....”
(Ron Wyatt. Zedekiah’s Cave. December 1997.)

THE SHOCKING DISCOVERY

On their next trip, they discovered that this cave led to a much larger system of caves and tunnels. Not all the tunnels were connected to each other, and they spent several hours chiselling through rock walls to find still more tunnels and caves. This cave system seemed completely untouched by human hands. It was now December 1981, the winter was cold in Jerusalem, and both Ron and his two sons became ill. Ron was deeply impressed that God would allow him find the Ark on this particular trip. He had experienced several answers to prayer that led him to this conclusion, but now because of their illness, prospects began to look bleak.

Ron relates, "My two sons had gotten very ill in 1982. I sent one of them home Christmas Eve, and the other one home New Year's Eve. I owed the hotel $300, I had no money at all. There's a friendly Arab let us eat at his restaurant, and that folks to me is humiliating. Now there's some things that I'm not comfortable with, and I was experiencing several of them on that trip. I decided that I was going to find the Ark of the Covenant or die in the hole. That may sound a little melodramatic, but I was humiliated. I couldn't pay my bill at the hotel, I'd rather be dead than in a situation like that...

So anyway, the little Arab guy who was letting us eat at his restaurant, he was a full grown man, but he was about that tall (Ron points to his chest height when he says this) and small; petite. So as we went through this cave system, he would crawl into the chambers and I'd give him a light, and he'd shine it around and

I'd peek through to see if it looked like anything in there. So we did this over and over, and we came to this one hole. I mean you wouldn't believe where all we'd gone in that cave. How many of you have ever been inside a big cave with tunnels and chambers and all? OK, you know what I'm saying. We had just been all over the place, up, down, different levels, and at this point in time we had gone about 45 feet down, and then back up, and here this hole was in the wall, about that big around (Ron makes a circle with his hands about 20cm apart), and there was a stalactite hanging right down the middle of it. It was the only stalactite I had seen in the cave that wasn't this little (Ron indicates a size of about 10cm with his fingers). This was a big one and I have it in my collection of things.

So I broke it off, made the hole big enough for him to get in, and he was crawling in there, and I started to hand him the light so he could do what we had been doing for several days. He came tearing out of there, his eyes were as big as human eyes can get and he said, "What's in there? What's in there? I'm not going back in there!" And I said, "Well what did you see?" He said, "I didn't see anything" And I thought, "Well, OK. Now he'd been in tighter places than that and had not responded that way." So, I got this little beam of light you know in a very dark place here, and I thought, "That is Divine terror", you know that's supernatural terror. So I figured that is either where the Ark of the Covenant is, or it's the way to get to it, one or the other, and God doesn't want this fellow to know where it is. So anyway, he just said, "I must get out of here", so off he went.

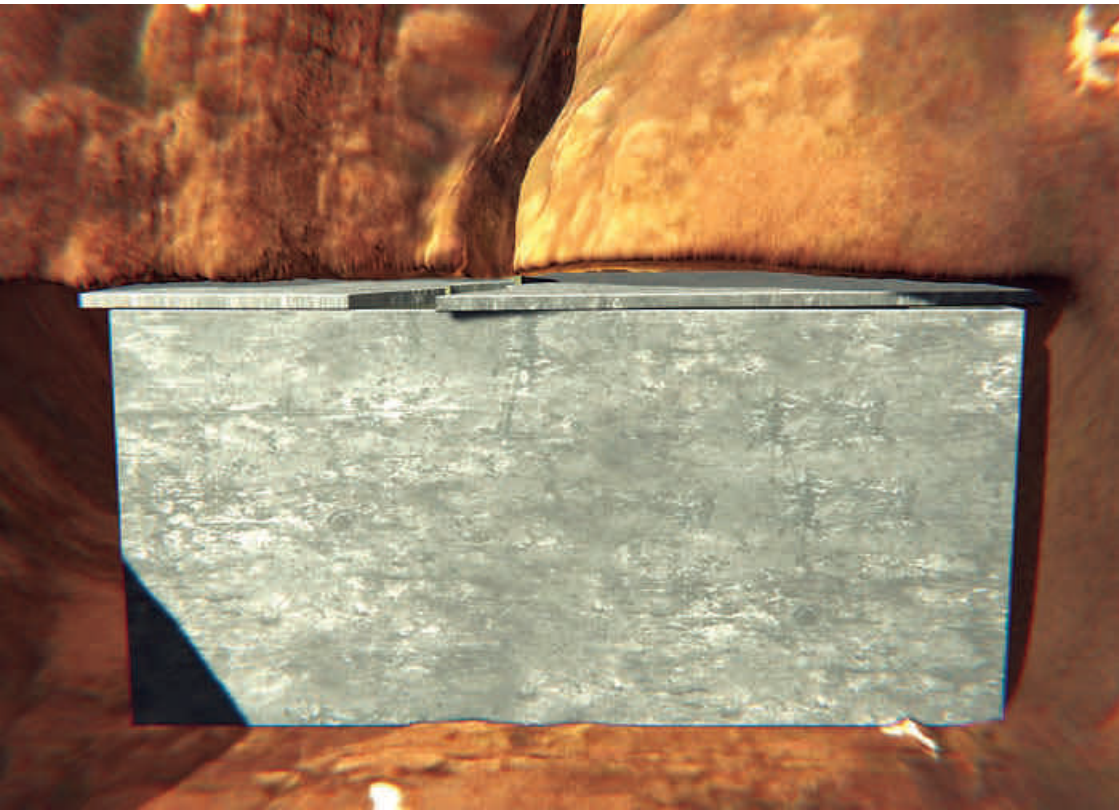
So I made the hole big enough for me to get in, and I got in there, and folks, it was full of rocks. Bigger than these here. Up to within 18 inches or so of the ceiling. If this young man hadn't have been terrorised and come scooting out of there like he did, I would not have gone in that place…

So anyway, I crawled in there with the flashlight, and I crawled around on top of the rocks, and I shined the light down between the cracks in the rock, and there a flat, gold thing reflected back at me. So I moved over and shined down through another. There was two reflections, one here, one there and one over here. So I knew it was a flat, gold top, and I thought, "The Ark of the Covenant!" I forgot about the cherubims sitting on top. They'd have been poking up through the rocks and stuff, on top of the Mercy Seat.

I started moving these rocks, and I stuck them anywhere I could. By the time I got down to that gold surface I had them behind my shoulders, leaning back against them. And it was the Table of Shewbread.

But anyway, I was looking for the Ark of the Covenant. And it was only then that I took time to carefully examine the rest of the chamber. See I had just crawled in, took a quick look and started checking down under the rocks.

So as I moved the flashlight along the wall, I saw a stone box sitting against the wall, with about this much space between it and the ceiling. The lid was broken, slid around and right above it was a crack with dark, brown-looking material on the bottom of this crack, and I was able to see the top of the lid of the box. On both sides of the broken pieces was more of this brown stuff (silence, Ron cries). All of a sudden I realised I was sitting in front of the Ark of the Covenant, and that Christ's blood had come down onto it (silence). I had never heard anybody preach anything about that sort of possibility, never. And it was too much for me. When I regained consciousness and looked at my watch again, 45 minutes



had passed from the time I crawled in the chamber."
(Ron Wyatt, Zedekiah's Cave. December 1997).

The authorities

Ron had previously thought that God promised him he would find the Ark on this trip, and although it had indeed been fulfilled, he had not yet been allowed to actually see it, neither was it possible for him to remove the Ark from the cave. In his frustration, Ron received another strong impression, "I only said you would find it. It will come out when the time is right."

Ron reported the discovery to the Israeli authorities, and later handed over a tiny artefact from the cave. An ivory pomegranate with an inscription identifying it to Solomon's temple. This pomegranate was the only object anyone had ever seen from the first temple, and was displayed in the Israeli Museum in Jerusalem. This discovery convinced them that Ron could well be telling the truth about the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant. Ron was the only person to have ever produced an object from the first temple, where the Ark was also situated. Ron knew that various critics around the world would not believe that it was him that produced this pomegranate, and so he broke off a tiny piece that he left in the chamber with the Ark of the Covenant.

The authorities told Ron to keep the discovery of the Ark secret. The reason being the enormous religious and political problems this discovery could create for Israel, which is already a fragile and explosive communitiy to say the least. They feared the possible violent reaction of some of the more extreme Jews if they learned that the Ark of the Covenant (the former residing place of the great "I AM" on earth) had been found. In previous times the struggle for the Temple Mount has created some bloody conflicts.

3D illustration of what happened on Calvary.

THE CONTENTS OF THE CHAMBER

It was not possible to bring any of the objects out of the chamber. Firstly it was full of rocks piled high around the temple furnishings, and secondly, Ron could not extract the artefacts through the tiny hole that he himself had to squeeze through. He would first have to locate the original entrance the men used in order to hide the objects. Ron returned to the chamber more than once. One time he brought a 'Trinkle Drill', which is used by Orthopedic surgeons, and a colonoscope, an optical instrument with a strong light-source, which doctors use to look into the human body. The stone casing was so high, that the lid was too close to the ceiling to look through the crack in the lid and see the Ark. With the drill Ron tried to make a small hole in the stone case, to be able to actually identify the Ark. The desired effect failed so he chiselled a hole into the stone casing just enough to feed the colonoscope through. This instrument only shows one small area at a time, but by moving it around he could soon see the golden object. The first thing he saw was the bottom of the crown-molding around the top of the Mercy Seat. Then he saw the flat, golden sides. This was enough for him to know that the Ark really was in there.

Subsequently Ron was able to identify the following objects in the chamber; The Ark of the Covenant, which was in the stone casing, the Table of Shew-bread, the golden Altar of Incense, the seven branched Lampstand, a large sword, an ephod, a brass money weight, several oil lamps, and a brass ring.

There were also other objects but Ron was uncertain as to what they had been used for. When Ron found these artefacts they were covered with animal skins. Upon the skins were laid wooden logs, and on top of them lay rocks.

The tables of stone with the Ten Commandments were still in the Ark of the Covenant, and on the side of the Ark was a small, open cubicle, which contained the Book of the Covenant, which Moses wrote by God's command. "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." (Deuteronomy 31:24-26. See also, Exodus 24:7, Deuteronomy 17:18 & 29:21). From what Ron could see, all of the books of Moses were there except Genesis. The scroll, made of animal skin and now thousands of years old, was in surprisingly excellent condition.

Ron also found seven oil lamps, which he supposed had been used by those that brought the objects into the chamber. One of the lamps was decorated with a typical Assyrian design, a goat or a ram, standing upon his hind legs and eating from a vine. This showed the cultural influence the Assyrians had in Judea during the time just before the Babylonian captivity.

The original entrance

The cave system, through which Ron had entered the chamber, appeared to be untouched by human hands. The hole through which he had entered was too small and badly located to have been the entrance Jeremiah and/or his men used to carry the large objects into the cave. The question now was which tunnel did these people use?

Ron began to inspect the chamber for another entrance. In one place he saw something had been covered with rocks, and it looked like it was leading to another open chamber. When he removed some of the rocks, he uncovered a long, natural tunnel with chisel marks telling him that at one time man had enlarged it. The problem Ron now encountered was that the rest of the tunnel was completely blocked off with large rocks. To clear the tunnel would be far too difficult for Ron, and after exiting and sealing up his own tiny entrance, he decided to search from the other side, for the place where this tunnel started.

Since the furnishings had been brought from the temple, obviously this was their starting point, and the chamber was their resting place. Ron was not aware of any tunnel that travelled in the direction of the temple, but he still had some idea as to where he could start his search. Zedekiah's Caves, which extends 230 meters into Mount Moriah, was at one point in time used as a stone quarry. This cave is located between the Temple Mount and Golgotha's escarpment, so could well be a possible link.

ZEDEKIAH'S CAVE

Dr. James Turner Barclay was an American who worked as a doctor and missionary in Jerusalem from 1851 to 1857. He is still known for (among other things) rediscovering a gate to the temple site, thus the gate adopted the name "Barclay's Gate".

Dr. Barclay would often walk his dog in the areas around the old city. One Sunday, in the winter season of 1854, he went for a walk along the northern side of Jerusalem's old city wall. Suddenly his dog disappeared, and Dr. Barclay whistled to it. The dog did not come, and Dr. Barclay's son, who accompanied them, started to search for the dog. As he looked along the part of the quarry where the old city wall was built, he found a deep hole from where they heard the dog barking deep inside the cave.

Thus this enormous cave was rediscovered, but it was found that over the preceding centuries the entrance to Zedekiah's Caves had become blocked up by stone constructions.

A way of escape
Many believe that Solomon used stone from Zedekiah's cave to build the magnificent temple. The Bible relates how the stones were cut out from a quarry, and how they were shaped and finished in the quarry to avoid noise in the city, during the construction of the temple.

The cave adopted the name "Zedekiah's Cave", because many thought that this was the cave King Zedekiah escaped through to flee Jerusalem during the Babylonian seige. However, the Bible only says, "And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby" (Ezekiel 12:12). "And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho" (2 Kings 25:4-5).

The opening of the stonecutters

While he walked around and examined this cave, Ron tried to empathise with the stonecutters. When he saw how deep into the mountain the cave extended, he understood how meaningless and tiresome it would have been to bring the stones out of the quarry, and then carry them into the city through one of the northern gates. As the quarry was underneath the city, it would be far easier to bring the stones directly from the quarry into the city. A simple hole in the roof of the cave could lighten the workers load considerably. Ron began to examine the pillars of rock, which the workers had left to support the roof of the cave. One of the pillars looked like a large mound of earth and debris, piled so high it passed through a hole in the roof. This made Ron think that maybe there was an opening in the roof of the quarry. Thus, the Ark could have been transported down through this hole in the ceiling, and then into a connecting tunnel, finally to be brought to the chamber where it now resides.

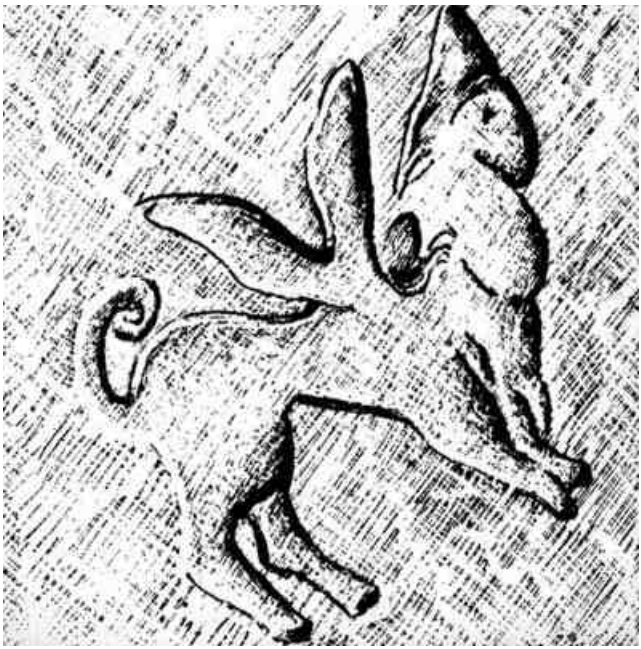
A guardian cherub

Ron began to look for tunnels, and he soon found one. It lay hidden behind boulders and overhanging rock, and was sealed by stones that had purposely been cut and shaped. The tunnel headed in the right direction, but it was still a long way to the chamber. If this were the right tunnel, he would have a job clearing it.

When the Frenchman, Charles Clermont-Ganneau in the late 19th Century

mapped out Zedekiah's cave, he drew sketches, maps and diagrams of almost every detail in the enormous quarry. One of the discoveries he made, was a cherub engraved on a pillar. It had a lion's body, a pair of wings and the head of a man with ancient head-dress. Clermont-Ganneau removed the cherub, which he sent to the Palestine Exploration Fund in London. It looked like a cherub from the Israelite Palace in Samaria. The style is dated to approximately the 7th century BC, when Israel was under the cultural influence of Assyria. This was before the Babylonians took Jerusalem, and coincided with the time the temple furniture was hidden.

With this connection in mind it is interesting to look again at the quotation from 2 Maccabees mentioned earlier. Here we are told Jeremiah and his men who hid the temple furniture in the cave, "…then blocked up the entrance. Some of his companions came to mark out the way, but were unable to find it. When Jeremiah learned of this he reprimanded them. 'The place shall remain unknown', he said, 'until God finally gathers His people together and shows mercy to them.'" It is possible that the engraved cherub, which was found so close to the blocked entrance, is the mark that was made by Jeremiah's men.



Later, Ron used radar scanning to ensure that there really was a tunnel from the quarry to the chamber where he found the Ark of the Covenant and the other objects. About six and a half meters below ground level he found a tunnel-like void which travelled in the direction of the cross holes and the chamber, but because of buildings obstructing the way, he was unable to follow the tunnel the whole way. Instead he took the radar with him into Zedakiah's cave and scanned the entrance he had found. When there turned out to be a void behind the stone blocks, he broke through. But debris blocked the tunnel further down, and it seemed like someone had tried to make it appear natural, as if trying to hide the fact that they had purposely sealed the tunnel. The passage was well blocked, and again, the job of clearing it would be extremely laborious.

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Ron now decided his only option to make a larger entrance to the chamber, was to dig a shaft from directly above, straight down through the rock. There was a risk involved as the shaft could collapse and destroy the objects in the cave below. It would also be an enormous project requiring much work. After several digs Ron managed to dig through about three meters of limestone, but the end was nowhere in sight. Almost ten years had passed since he first found the Ark, and his frustration grew because of the enormous efforts he had undergone, all of which now seemed fruitless.

One or two months before he was to return to Jerusalem to work on the shaft, Ron held a meeting in a church in North Carolina. He showed video and the audience asked questions. During the question time, one individual asked when Ron was next planning to be in Israel.

When Ron and his assistant later arrived at the hotel in Jerusalem, that very same man was sitting there waiting for him. Apparently he believed he was some kind of a prophet, and he offered his help on the project, but so long as he was there, it was impossible for Ron to continue with his work. He lost all hope and felt like abandoning the whole project. He believed that his unsuccessful trip meant that he was now "taken off the job". He knew that God did not particularly need *him* to complete the work.

It was then that Ron had an experience that made a life long impression on him.

Ron was sitting close to the place they had found the niches and the cross holes. The man that had made Ron's task so difficult was only sitting a few metres away, eating lunch under the shade of a large bush. The ground level where they were now sitting was many metres lower than the surrounding area. Suddenly Ron heard a voice behind him saying, "God bless you in what you are doing here". Ron swung around. At the top of a staircase, stood a tall, slim man with dark hair. He was wearing a long white robe and head covering similar to those worn in biblical times. Ron had not told anyone what he was "doing", and he wondered who this person was. He had a strange feeling that this person knew everything about him, and what he was doing. Ron tried to find out who this stranger was, and tried to make polite conversation. "Are you from this area?" he asked. "No," was the simple reply, and then silence. "Are you a tourist?" Ron asked. "No." Silence again. Ron did not know what more he could say, so he just sat there and looked into the friendly face. Then the man said, "I am on my way from South Africa to the New Jerusalem." And he repeated his first words, "God bless you in what you are doing here." Then he turned and walked away.

Because he was sitting under the bush, Ron's uninvited guest had not seen this man dressed in white, but he had heard the whole conversation. He exclaimed, "Ron, do you think we have been talking with an angel?" "At least," replied Ron; for he was left with the impression that it could have been Jesus Christ Himself.

There is only one entrance into the Garden Tomb, and everyone must pass through it in order to enter the complex. Ron asked the staff if they had seen the person dressed in white and they replied that no such person had entered or left the Garden Tomb. Nobody had seen him. This experience strengthened Ron and encouraged him to continue, no matter what was around the next corner.

THE FOURTH VISIT TO THE CHAMBER

Ron had tried several times both with cameras and a video camera to take clear pictures of the Ark, but every time the pictures turned out foggy, and this caused him a great deal of frustration. On his fourth visit into the chamber Ron took an 8mm video camera and tripod with him, hoping to finally shoot clear footage of the Ark.

After entering through the same entrance that he always had used to the chamber, he immediately noticed that something was different. The rocks that had previously filled the cave were no longer there. A light shone in the chamber, but from where he could not quite make out. Ron then saw that the chamber had been completely cleaned up, and all the rocks cleared away. A task that Ron knew would have to be done, but would take a long time, and now the job was finished. The chamber was totally cleared, and the Ark of the Covenant had been taken out of the stone case. Ron was overwhelmed by what he saw. The Ark was against a wall in the chamber, directly under the earthquake crack in the roof where the blood of Jesus had flowed down onto the Mercy Seat. The other temple furnishings were in their correct positions in relation to the Ark. The rest of the objects were laid along one of the walls.

Even though Ron could not describe it exactly, the wall behind the Ark looked like crystal and radiated the colours of the rainbow. While he was looking at this, he suddenly realised he was not alone. Ron could feel the presence of

angels. There were four young men with him in the cave, but they did not resemble how angels are popularly portrayed. All were dressed completely ordinarily. Ron stood frozen for several minutes, not moving or talking. He wondered what they were doing there and why they were there, but he found himself unable to speak.

One of the angels stepped forward and began to speak to Ron. They told Ron that they were the four angels, assigned to guard the Ark since it's fabrication. Ron approached the Ark, and was instructed to remove the Tables of Stone from the Ark, and the angel placed them in a niche in the wall, and proceeded to inform Ron of various important matters. The Tables of Stone were not going to be put on public display until after a law would be passed, that would eventually spread throughout the entire world. A law that would force everyone to receive, "the mark of the beast".

Ron set up his video camera and began filming before he withdrew the Tables of Stone from the Ark of the Covenant. He took his camera and the video tape and left the cave through the original entrance. By following this tunnel he found his way out of the cave system and onto the street. He hurried to his hotel room and checked the footage. The Ark, the angels and the Tables of Stone were all clearly visible and Ron was delighted it had turned out so clearly. But Ron's happiness suddenly turned as he remembered what the angel had said. This was not going to be shown before "the mark of the beast" law was passed. Ron knew the nature of the law he was referring to, and knew the meaning behind the angel's words. What was he going to do with the video tape until this time? Where would it be safe?

Ron, not knowing what to do, decided to return to the chamber and ask the angel what he should do with the video tape. When he entered the chamber Ron told the angel that he did not have a place adequately safe to keep the video tape. The angel took the video from Ron's hand and placed it by the Tables of Stone, which were still standing on the niche.

By the late 1990's, Ron was nearing his seventies. He was tiring with all the pressures of his work as well as battling a certain type of cancer. Still he persisted, working hard, and doing whatever he could to help people spread the message that these discoveries had for the world, and the message of the living Christ. On August 4th, 1999, Ron Wyatt died of cancer in Tennessee, USA.

THE BLOOD TEST

Ron again tells the story to an audience in Zedekiah's Cave, "After I had been in there [the cave with the Ark of the Covenant] three times, the fourth time I came in, there were four young men standing in there, that if I had met them on the street I would have seen no difference between them and anybody else. One of them said, We're the angels that have been assigned to the Ark of the Covenant, and we'll tell you what God wants done with this, and we'll help you do what He wants done with this. They wanted me to take a sample of the blood and have it analysed. All I had with me was a film cartridge (camera film container) and a pull tab from a Coke-a-Cola can. So I took this pull tab and straightened it out to make a little bit of a scoop with it, and I collected about ¾ of that little canister full of this dried blood. We had this analysed. We put an amount of this blood in some normal saline at body temperature, and we swirled this gently for 72 hours. And this was part of the instructions I got from the angel. When we put this in a growth medium for another 72 hours and put it under a microscope the white blood cells were dividing. We were able to get a chromosome count. There were 24 chromosomes. 23 Christ got from Mary. He got one which was the sex-determinant, or the y from His heavenly Father for a total of 24. All of us have 46. We get 23 from our mother and 23 from our father. Now this blood folks was still alive after almost 2000 years. The people that did the test thought I had pulled a fast one of some kind on them. Never in their lives had they ever seen any dried blood that was still alive. There's a Scripture text talking about Christ. It's in Psalms, it says, You will not leave my soul in hell, and neither will you let my body see corruption. So after almost 2000 years, Christ's blood was very much alive, and still is. So the Spirit, the blood and the water are bearing witness on earth."
(Ron Wyatt, Zedekiah's Cave. November 1996)

THE MESSAGE NO ONE HAD HEARD

Ron Wyatt's story has attracted much attention as well as furious debate. A simple man was telling the world of an incredible story that nobody had heard before. To some it was a fantastic story where the spiritual world is described as credible and real. Ron Wyatt was claiming that the Bible, the most widely read book in the world, was historical fact, but not only that, he also claims that the Man that was born into this world approximately 2000 years ago, really was the Messiah that the Jews had waited for, but rejected. Not only that, but it is claimed He was the One through whom God created this world. Ron's discovery still to this day stirs up unbelief, even in the Christian world, and creates unrest within the Jewish community. Yet this message is not reserved for the religious communities. Indeed it has an enormous effect on the whole world, for it poses the question, "Is the Bible really true?"

Ron Wyatt's story does not lack credibility as several individuals were with him when he was digging, and are able to testify to the truth of Ron's story. At one point in time there were about fifteen different people who assisted in clearing tunnels. There was the small Arab man that first entered the cave and was struck by an indescribable fear, only to come running out of the chamber. The pomegranate, the first artefact ever discovered from the first temple, was placed in a small glass cabinet in the Israeli Museum and was a visible witness. The blood test from the chamber has shocked professional researchers around the world, and nobody can deny many of the things that witness to the fact that Ron Wyatt's story is true. However, to some the story remains too unbelievable because they have not seen the Ark or the blood themselves. Thus they choose to disbelieve. Ron said, one day the world will see the evidence with their own eyes, but if

they do not want to believe it even then, there is little more that can be done to convince them. Are people ready to believe that the world was in fact created, and that we did not evolve from apes, or reptiles?

The blood of Christ sprinkled upon the mercy seat contains the message that no one had ever heard, or even thought of before. Not even Ron Wyatt himself, before he had discovered the Ark and told the story. Still one question remains in many people's minds; why did it happen and what does it all mean?

Pictures from several of Ron Wyatt's archeological discoveries.

Satelite photo of the boat formation that prompted Ron to begin researching the structure. Incredibly, the boat has the same measurements as described in the Book of Genesis in the Bible. This satelite photo is taken before an earthquake lifted the object 6 meters up. The photo on the next page is taken after the earthquake. The remaining woodwork is now petrified, thus preserving it for so many years. The boat formation also shows a higher occurrence of carbon content than the surrounding area.

Several metal detections have been performed over the boat, revealing the presence of metal rivets at regular intervals. Such a regular pattern rules out the possibility that it is a natural formation. Some of the metal rivets have been dug up, examined and tested, revealing sophisticated alloys which could only have been made by man.

Anchor stones similar to those found on other ancient boats are also found in the area close to the boat hull. Christians have subsequently engraved crosses on the stones.

The remainders of the ark are found in the Mountains of Ararat (Urartu), the exact place the Bible describes Noah's Ark came to rest.The closest village is "Nisir", identified in Babylonian cuneiform writings as the exact place the boat landed.

The boat structure as you find it today, lying in the volcanic lava which pushed it down the mountainside. (You can find the story of Noah's Ark in Genesis chapters 6,7,8,9 & references in Luke 17, & 26-27.)
Right: The author's son in front of the sign "Nuhun Gemisi" (Noah's Ark) directing people to the sight.

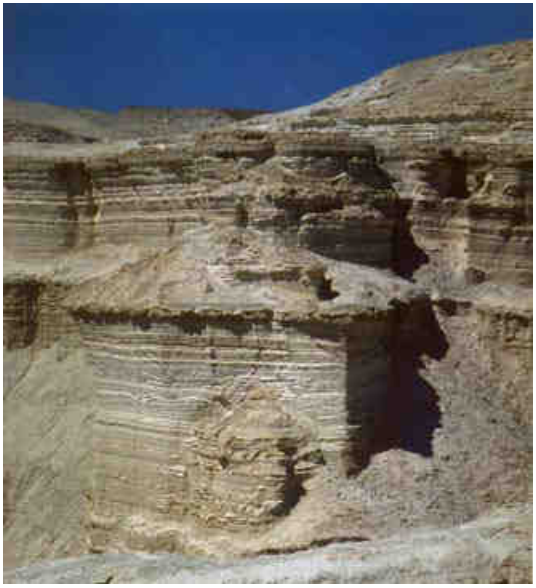
The remains of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were discovered in recent years. The massive ashen structures littered with literally millions of sulphur balls in varying sizes. The stable climate has preserved the remains for thousands of years. The Bible describes how the remains of the cities would look, “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes...” (2 Peter 2:6) “And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim” (Deuteronomy 29:23)

(You can find the story of the destruction of these cities in Genesis 19, & references in 2 Peter 2:6-8 & Luke 17:28-29)

The powder-like ash was analysed and proved to be ash resulting from limestone having been burnt in the presence of sulphur.

Ron Wyatt examines a small part of the structure which broke away. This section contains several sulphur balls with distinct, surrounding burn rings.

The picture at the bottom to the right shows the remainders of a style of building with support walls, which were very common in Israel at that time and after. Comparable support walls from Bet Shean can be seen above.

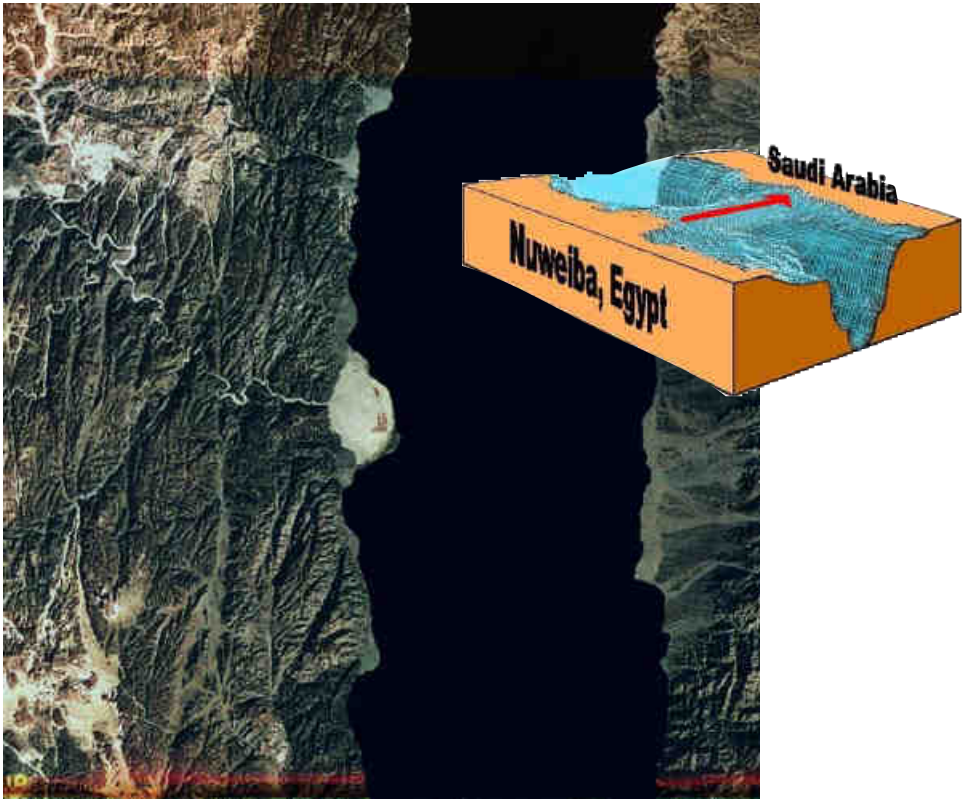


Joseph's identity in Egyptian hieroglyphs have not been recognised by Egyptologists not wishing to confirm the Bible's accuracy.

Joseph had great influence in Egypt and his wisdom was well known long after his death, even up until the reign of the Greek Empire. A great deal of Joseph's teachings to the Egyptians was misused and intermingled with Egyptian idolatry. "Imhotep", or Joseph, only served one God, and only taught this belief in God.

One of the few statues of Imhotep.

Pharaoh Djoser records Imhotep's position in Egypt inscribed on a statue of himself. Imhotep was next in line to Pharaoh, was head over his whole house, and had constructed the great grain storage pits. The similarities between Imhoptep and Joseph are so many and precise that they cannot be coincidence. They both lived to 110 years old. During the reign of Pharaoh Djoser, Imhotep, who we know as Joseph, managed to extend Egypt's boundaries far south. The Bible tells us that this happened during the great famine, when everyone sold their properties to Pharaoh to buy grain. Old inscriptions in Egypt record that during Pharaoh Djoser's reign there was a 7 year famine in Egypt, and that the priests had certain privileges exactly as the Bible describes.

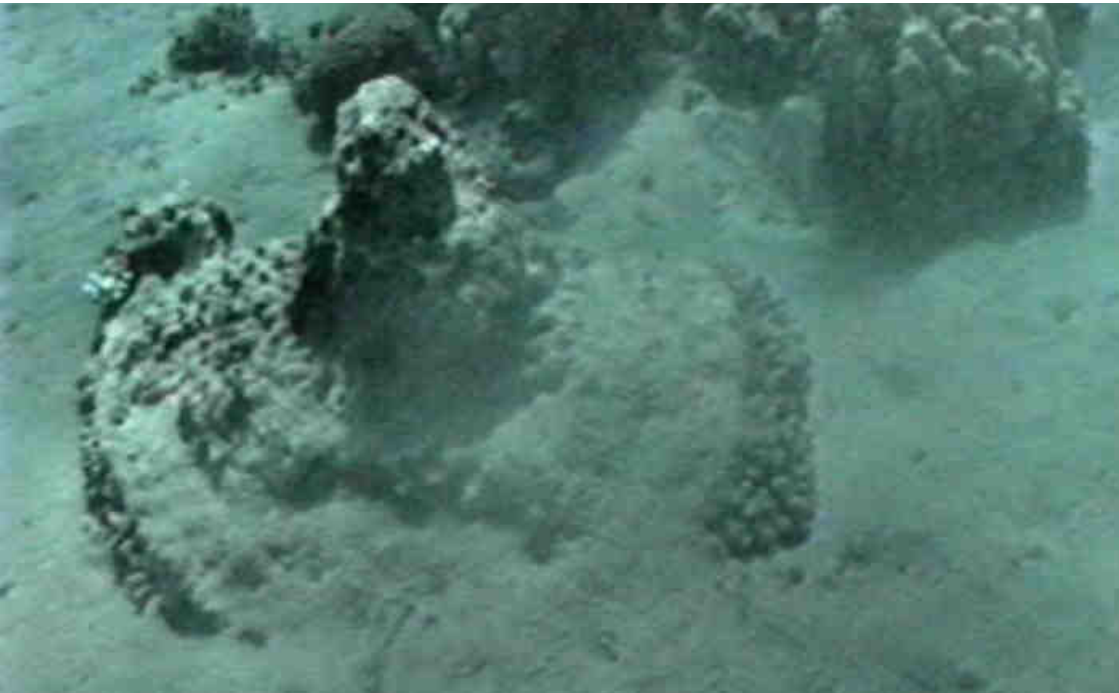


Nuweiba, Egypt, where Ron Wyatt and his sons were searching for evidence of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea. The satelite photo shows the road through the mountains which ends at a massive beach. Due to the mountains toward the south, and an Egyptian fort in the north, the Israelites were trapped. They could not return the way they had come as the Egyptian army were in close pursuit. (You can find the story in Exodus 14.)

Directly across the sea there is a well defined underwater land-bridge, creating a shallow, gradually descending pathway across the mighty depths. No large, obstructing coral reefs or sudden depths, like you find elsewhere in the Gulf of Aquaba.

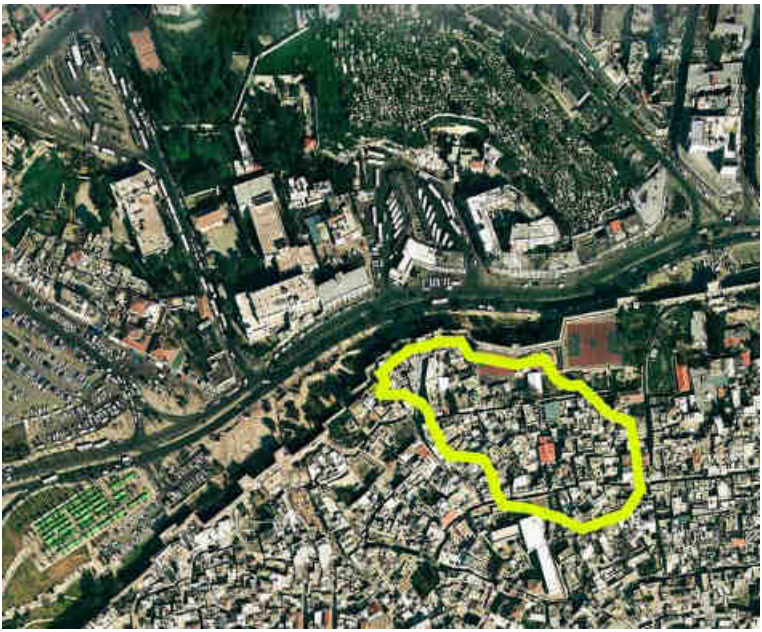
Top: Today, researchers as well as amateurs from several different countries have dived on the sea bed looking for the remains of Pharaoh's army. Remains like those shown here are found all the way across to the other side.

Bottom: An ancient Egyptian coralized chariot wheel found at the crossing site. There were also coralized human remains and coralized chariots and chariot wheels.



Pillars were found on both the Egyptian and the Saudi Arabian shore. The one found on the Egyptian side was lying in the water and the inscriptions were eroded away. The pillar on the Saudi side had inscriptions commemorating Israel's crossing and indicating that it was erected by Solomon as a memorial. This pillar has now been taken by the Saudi authorities.

Above: Ron Wyatt in Zedekiah's Cave. The sign behind him is where a cherubim was found engraved into the rock.



Zedekiah's Caves facing the Garden Tomb. A tunnel goes from this cave to the cave with the Ark.

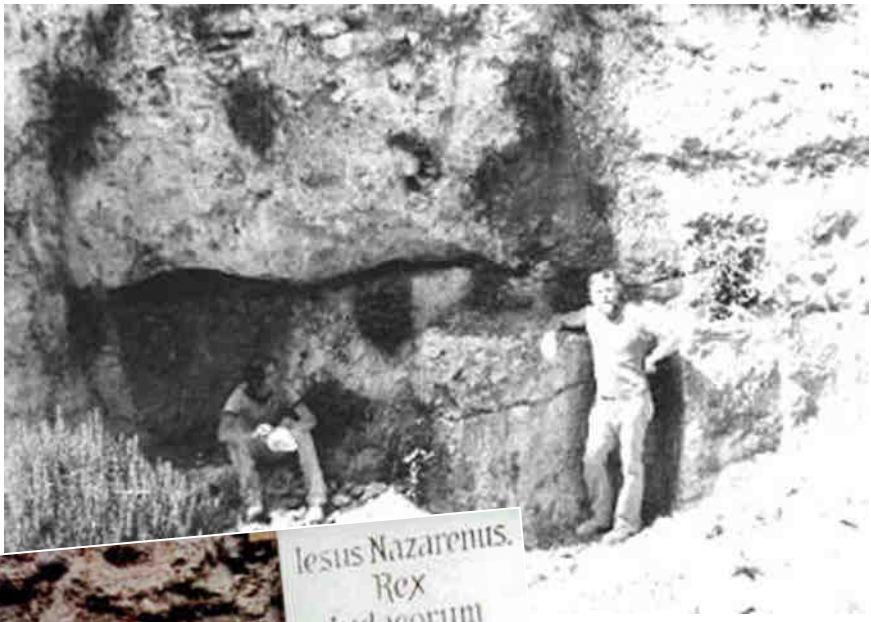
There is a mass of tunnels leading in all directions under Jerusalem. There were many problems with the Palestinians when Israel chose to open this tunnel for tourists, which runs north of the Wailing Wall under the Old City. Right: There is said to be a tunnel from here to the Mosque. The tunnel is blocked up.

Top: An old photograph of the Golgotha escarpment.

Left: This is how it looks today. In this picture, the Garden Tomb is to the left behind the buildings. The photo is taken from Jerusalem's city wall, on the other part of Mount Moriah.

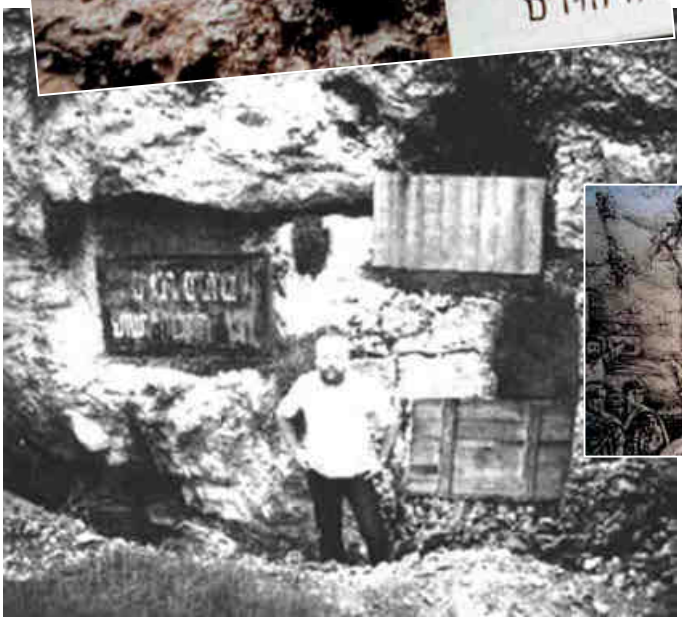
Golgotha, or Skull Hill.

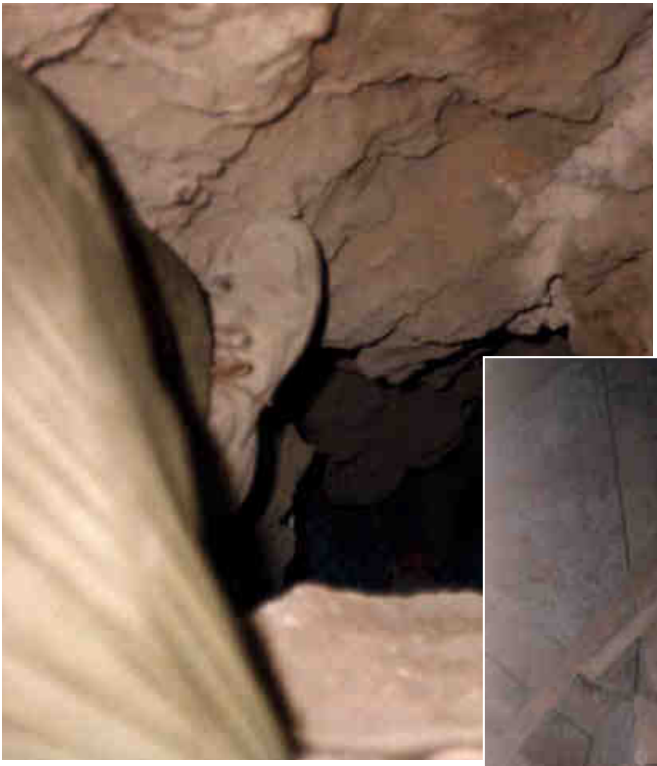
Above: Jesus's tomb from Gordon's Calvary in Jerusalem.
Below: A close-up photograph of the tomb. When this tomb was rediscovered at the end of the 18th century it was found empty. The tomb was originally lower than the surrounding area and the entrance was considerably smaller than it is today. The tomb has been restored.



Top: Ron leaning on one of the cut outs.

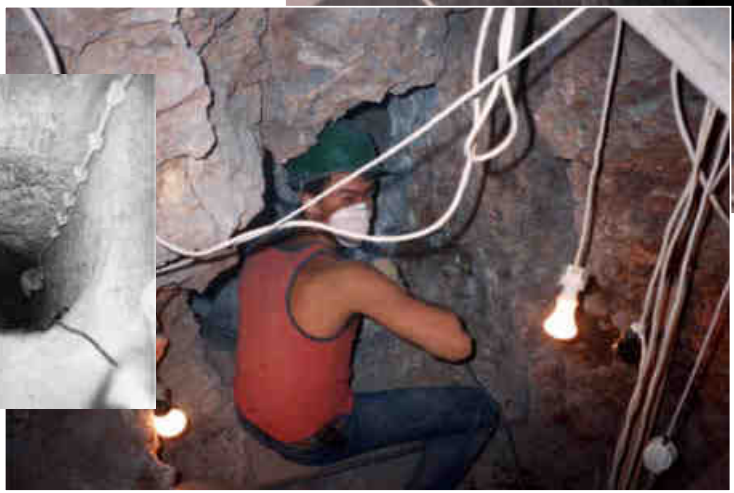
Left and below: Ron made signs and put them in the niches to see how it might have looked.





Left: In several places there were open holes which dropped straight down.

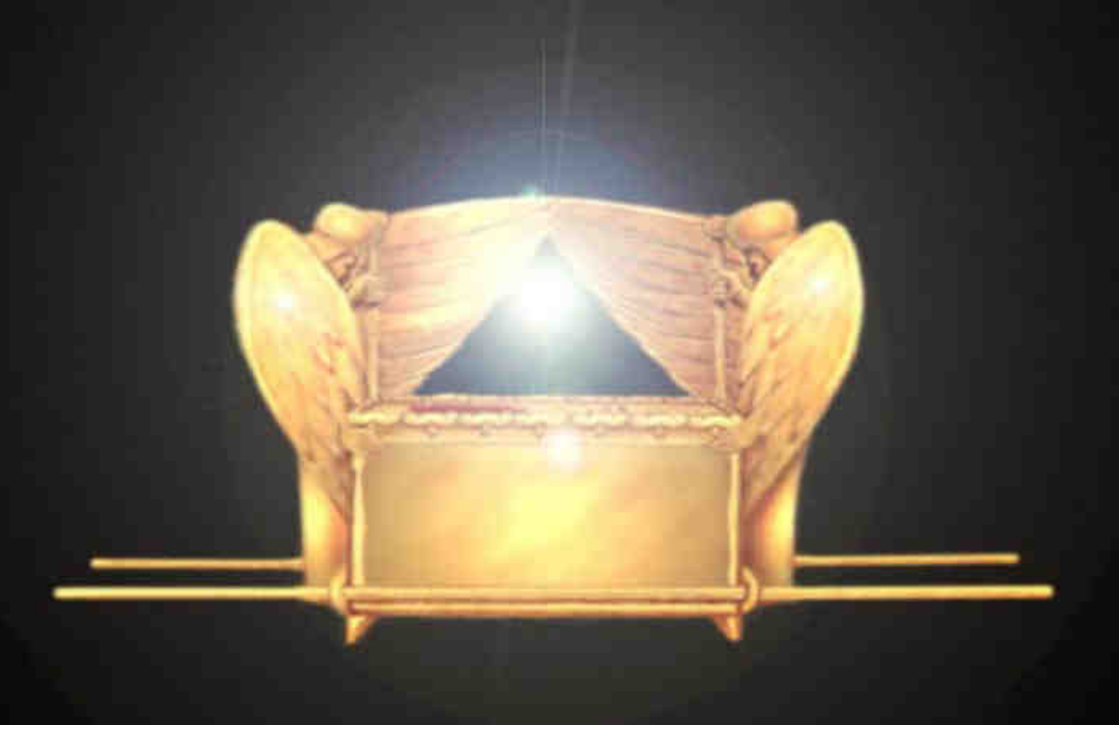
Right: One of Ron's many assistants digging in the cave system.
Below: The workers wore masks as protection from dust created from the digging. The photo shows one of Ron's assistants.



The enterence Ron used to access the Ark of the Covenant and the crucifixion site.
These pictures are from recent excavations at the same place.
Photo: John Berglund

Above: Ron and his youngest son Ronny outside Zedekiah's Cave in 1995.

To the right: The place where the Man who encouraged Ron to continue his work, was standing.



Above: Illustration of the Ark of the Covenant, drawn by Jim Pinkoski according to Ron Wyatt's description.
Left: Inside Zedekiah's Cave.
Below: By the entrance which leads to the tunnel where the Ark of the Covenant now lies.

Part 3
THE DELIVERER

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Isaiah 53:1-3

When Christ was born under the reign of Augustus, Augustus called himself, Son of God and High Priest.

THE DELIVERER

The miracle child

During Medio-Persia's reign the Jews had been allowed to rebuild Jerusalem and a new temple where Solomon's temple once stood. After Medio-Persia's fall, Alexander the Great from Greece took most of the land that had been under Medio-Persia. After Greece, the Roman Empire conquered this land, which included Jerusalem. The Jews lived in relative peace and were even permitted to practise their belief, despite being under Roman dominion. Herod was the king who ruled over Jerusalem.

According to the writings of their ancestors the Jews were to expect a Messiah, who would come and deliver them from oppression. The official understanding was that he would deliver them from the oppression of the Roman Empire, and empower the Jews to become the new rulers of the world. One of the prophecies was that this "Prince of Peace" was to arrive before Israel lost her national government and status (Genesis 49:10). Now there was a Roman emperor sitting in the palace in Jerusalem. What had happened to this man who would redeem the people?

Several unusual incidents had occurred. A priest named Zechariah had maintained that an angel told him he would have a child with his wife Elisabeth. A child that would "go before Him", or prepare the way for Messiah. Wise men from the east had come and created a stir in Jerusalem when they came in search of the newly born, "King of the Jews". Even some shepherds

claimed to have had a visit from angels who told them the same news. All Jews knew the prophecy that the Prince was to come from Bethlehem (Matthew 2:6, Micah 5:2) but only the wise men and the shepherds made any effort to travel to Bethlehem and establish for themselves whether or not this Deliverer had really been born. King Herod on the other hand took this as so serious a threat to his throne that he ordered all boys two years or younger to be killed, in fear of the coming, "King of the Jews". The rumours of the Deliverer's birth were not easy to forget for the Jews after Herod's drastic and brutal action.

One man did enter the scene claiming that he was indeed this Deliverer, and about four hundred disciples followed him. His name was Theudas, but he was soon killed. His followers were scattered, and that which they had started diminished into nothing. Then another man came. He was from Galilee, and many people also followed him. Judas was his name, but he met the same end as his predecessor, and again his disciples were scattered. Rumours of this child's birth spread throughout the whole country, but indifference exceeded curiosity, as the people's cynicism grew. Could this be yet another deception, as it was with Theudas and Judas?

Elisabeth had given birth to the child that the angel prophesied would "go before" the Deliverer. Shortly after, her relative Mary gave birth in Bethlehem, to the Child who was so widely spoken of. More and more people knew who Mary's Child was, as many had received revelations, identifying Him as the Deliverer.

A man married Mary despite the fact that her Child was not his. Mary maintained

Nazareth today.

that she was still a virgin, and Joseph received a message from an angel that Mary was being truthful. All these events fulfilled the Jewish prophecies of the Messiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son" (Isaiah 7:14)*. The child was named Yeshua**, but is commonly known in the western world as Jesus, after the Greek translation Iêsous. The Boy grew up in poverty, in a town infamous for its lack of morality and religion; certainly not the most promising town to grow up in. When the Boy became a youth, He began to work with His stepfather Joseph, as a carpenter and bricklayer, which were physically demanding trades. Yeshua grew quietly into His twenties without showing much indication of being the Deliverer. He lived an ordinary life and worked hard like most others. He had a good physique, and was strong because of the labouring He performed every day. The young Man had several brothers; Jacob, Joses, Simon and Jude. He experienced grief and loss at his step-father's death, and His life of hardship was intensified by poverty and mockery from others.

Later in life, Yeshua lived a quiet life in Galilee, when His cousin, whom He had never met, began to preach about the Deliverer's soon appearance. This was Elisabeth and Zechariah the priest's son, named John.

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*The Hebrew word 'almah in Isaiah 7,14 means "young woman", and in the Tanakh always "a young woman of unsullied reputation", which is why the Jewich translators of the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Tanakh prepared 200 years before Yeshua's birth, rendered this word into Greek as parthenos, "virgin", this is the word used at Matthew 1:23 (Quote from the Jewish Bible, David Stern)

***Y-H-V-H saves, the name is also a masculine form of yeshu'ah (Salvation)*

The baptism

John's courage led him to minister to the people whilst bypassing the authority of the Jewish leaders. He held meetings independently from them, and without their approval. He was recognised as a prophet by the people, and so the Jewish leaders dared not interfere with his ministry. John told both the leaders and the people very plainly, it did not matter whether they were from a Jewish lineage or not, if they did not do the will of God. They could not call themselves the promised people if they did not keep the covenant they had made with God. If they broke it, they would be subject to the same circumstances as their ancestors before them, who were overcome by their enemies. So the conditions remained the same; if they would keep the covenant, God could protect them individually and as a people, but if they broke this covenant relationship, God would not protect them from the consequences of their own actions, just as He did not with other nations.

God could have led more people to the birth of Jesus than just the wise men and the shepherds. He could have led the Jewish priests and leaders there, but when they refused to be led by God in their lives and their worship, they lost this opportunity. Thus God did not differentiate between Jew or Gentile. Those interested in God's prophecies and the promise of the Messiah, received the blessing no matter who they were. Therefore, Gentiles from the east were led

Baptism in the Jordan River today.

to the side of Yeshua, and not the Jewish leaders. John tried to explain that it was the heart, the character, and a person's actions that mattered, and not which genealogy they belonged to, or even which position they held. He spoke this plainly to the religious leaders, the Jews and the Romans without bias.

John began to baptize adults who had made a decision to turn from the sinful life they were living, and to start over again, thus he became known as John the Baptist. Their baptism would symbolize a new birth or a new life. Some wondered if John was the Deliverer they were expecting, but he told them plainly he was not.

One day, now thirty years of age, Yeshua approached the river where John was baptizing, and requested baptism from him. John soon recognised who this Man was standing in front of him, and humbly submitted, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But Yeshua gently persisted that it had to be done. Then, John the Baptist saw "the Spirit of God descending like a dove" over Yeshua, and a voice from heaven that proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17). This incident created such a reaction among those who witnessed it, that the news spread far and wide. Immediately after His baptism Yeshua disappeared. When He returned He had become thin, and looked worn. He had fasted the entire time, and had not eaten for forty days. Later in His life, Yeshua told His disciples about the hard trials He had suffered in the desert where He had retreated to. When John saw him again, He witnessed to the people that Yeshua was "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), and that this was the Man he said was to come. The Jews who expected a great deliverer, must have been disappointed when they saw the thin, worn out young Man. He was a carpenter from Nazareth, who had never attended their rabbinical schools, and who came from a poor and insignificant home. It was not difficult for people to immediately look down upon this young Man, who was of a socially lower class than themselves.

YESHUA'S MINISTRY

Yeshua began His preaching alone. It was a ministry that was to continue for over three years before it would come to a brutal end. As soon as it began, He was accompanied by several young men. Many of those who openly received the message of John the Baptist, also gladly received his message that Yeshua was the Deliverer. Nevertheless, it took some time for them to fully understand why John called Him "the Lamb of God". They asked if they could follow Yeshua to is home and listen to Him. Yeshua started to teach in the synagogues, out in the open field and wherever He had opportunity. It was not only His profound teaching from the books of Moses and the prophets that attracted attention, but His miracles too. More and more people proclaimed of their miraculous healings from their diseases by His hand. The most feared and incurable diseases disappeared at this young Man's command, and nobody could explain these miracles away.

Yeshua soon became unpopular among the religious teachers of higher standing, the scribes and the leaders. They had grown used to the admiration and respect of the people, and enjoyed the control they held over the people's religious lives. They decided what was truth, and what was error, and the people trusted them. They had devised their own rules which the people had to follow. This was their interpretation, and that of their predecessors, as to how the words of the prophets, and the law of Moses should be observed. However, now a young and unlearned Man, from a poor, insignificant family, was rapidly growing in influence over the people, although He also suffered passionate criticism, and strong

resistance from many.

The thought of this man being the Messiah, the King of the Jews, soon met resistence. The religious leaders attempted to enter into debate with Him, in order to show the people that they were intellectually and spiritually superior to Him, but everyone who made such an attempt ended up disappointed. Yeshua knew the Scriptures more profoundly than anyone else, and could always justify His actions from them.

Every Passover, the Jews from all over the country came to sacrifice the Passover lamb. The Passover celebration and it's sacrificial rites were performed in memory of the Israelites' freedom from Egyptian slavery, during the time of Moses. Before they left Egypt, under the command of "I AM", everyone was to sacrifice a lamb. On one occasion, when it was nearing the Passover, and the people were making their way to the temple, Yeshua was also on his way. People had turned the sacred temple into a market where they would buy and sell animals to sacrifice. People that had come from far away to sacrifice, were willing to pay even the highest prices for a sacrificial animal. Many were overcharged, and the meaning behind the whole sacrificial system was lost in the noise and commotion of the money-changers. When Yeshua saw this, He "poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables." He shouted, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." (John 2:15-16). Not only did He exert authority over the area, which ordinarily only the leaders possessed, but He also called the temple His Father's house. Who did He think He was? The Son of God? Was that not blasphemy? Or perhaps He was one of those radicals, a trouble maker like Judas from Galilee or Theudas, who also stirred up trouble?

His popularity diminished considerably when it became obvious that He was not willing to fight the Romans and reclaim the country. Instead He talked of setting people free from sin. He declared that they were slaves to sin, and that it was because of them breaking the moral law that they were now in captivity (John 8:31-36, 1 John 3:4). He plainly declared them sinners. How dare He? The leaders and the people were all labelled law breakers who needed to repent, and live a moral life. But was there really anything wrong with their lives? Surely, it was the Romans that enslaved them, and not sin? Were they not a chosen nation? If God was with them, what right did this Man have

to denounce them as sinners and in need of a true conversion to God? No, they thought, surely this could not be the Deliverer they had been waiting for. The Messiah they believed in, and had learned about from teachers and rabbis, would be great and awe-inspiring and would save them from the Roman oppression. The Messiah they expected, was not to be a poor man who attacked his own people, calling them sinners.

The townsmen from Nazareth, where Yeshua had spent His childhood, disliked the idea of Him being "the King of the Jews" even more so. Most of the people knew Him and had seen Him growing up, and knew His mother and His brothers. Many felt that they were better than this Person, and they could not imagine being subservient to Him in any way. The miracles Yeshua was doing did not manage to penetrate their pride.

On one occasion, when Yeshua was in the synagogue, where He went every Sabbath, He was asked to read from the Scriptures. He was given a text from Isaiah concerning the Messaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19, Isaiah 61:1-2). While everyone's attention was on Him, He continued, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He then explained to them what John had tried to explain, that no connection to any family or nationality, nor any position in society made them specially selected for salvation. It was how they lived their lives, and their individual relationship with God and His covenant that mattered. He said, "many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:25-27). Although they had seen Yeshua grow up, and seen Him every Sabbath in this synagogue, they became so furious with Him that they tried to kill Him. They forced Him out of the town and onto the edge of a cliff. They were ready to push Him off the cliff, when by a miracle, He escaped the mob to retreat to safety.

Rarely did Yeshua return to Nazareth after this. People He knew and had grown up with had tried to kill him. They were people that supposedly represented

God in the synagogue, and it must have been a painful episode for Yeshua. The beginning of Yeshua's mission bore Him difficulties and hardship, but He persisted in His preaching, only this time for those that wanted to hear.

On several occasions, thousands of people gathered about Him, outside, in nature, where He preached to them. The crowds flocked to Him. Rumours were scattered far and wide about this Man who not only healed people from disease and mental disorder, but nature's elements even obeyed Him!

In one case, Yeshua and the twelve disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee in a boat, and many small boats followed Him to see where they were going. A violent storm soon swept across the sea, the large waves broke over the boat and they were close to shipwreck. The small boats that were following, were also in great danger. Exhausted through fear, and beaten by the violent storm, they listened as He commanded the storm, "Peace, be still", and the wind and the waves were calmed, and a silence rested over the sea. The people in the other boats were frightened, as were Yeshua's disciples, and in fear and wonder they said, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark 4:36-41). Who was this Man?

THE PHENOMENON OF SIN

The Phenomenon of sin

Yeshua continued His teaching despite the resistance of the Jewish leaders. He taught the people out of the Scriptures, concerning the laws they had once received from "I AM". He explained the commandments deeper and clearer, and tried to teach them the meaning behind these laws. They existed so that man could live in peace with one another, with the universal laws, and with God. The first four of the Ten Commandments which had been placed in the Ark of the Covenant, explained how to "love the Lord thy God", and the last six showed mankind how to "love thy neighbour" (1 John 2:3-4, 5:2 & John 14:15 & 21). The laws regarding diet, were given to them to protect them from suffering and disease. He explained that to hurt others and to be selfish, would only destroy both the offender as well as those around him. Murder, rape, theft, selfishness, jealousy and such things had to be cleansed from the soul, so that man could be happy. He tried to show that liberty was not to be allowed to do whatever they wanted, but for all to be happy and peaceful with the choices each member of society made. If a man offended a woman, it would be a loss of liberty for the woman. Every act that hurt someone physically or emotionally, was depriving that person of their liberty.

Yeshua called sin, "captivity". It was not only captivity for the victim, but also for the perpetrator. The breaking of the law begins within the person, and can create fear, depression, guilt, and a poor emotional life which will affect the physical health. Therefore they had laws which would attend to the

liberty of the person. That way they could live safely with each other, be spared from grief and misery, and at the same time have peace with God. Those who transgressed the law of the Ten Commandments were called, "sinners". Sin and transgression is dealt with in the same way, and treated as the same thing in the Bible (John 3:4, Matthew 6:12, 1 John 3:4).

Yeshua would never in any way excuse sin. Several times He came close to tears in front of the people. His wish to help those who suffered physically and psychologically, whether their condition was the result of their own actions or not, made an indelible impression on many. But His main goal was to help men to convert, and to help them stop their sinful and destructive behaviour. "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" He said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John 8: 46 & 34). Yeshua knew that it was hard for many to live differently from how they had previously lived in sin, and He maintained that He would help those who wanted to be converted, but how could *He* help them? Who was He?

Freedom from the Romans

The Israelites had previously been promised freedom from the surrounding nations if they kept the covenant. However, when they broke this covenant, God could not protect them anymore, and they suffered the consequences of their choices. When they eventually reformed and came back to God, they experienced peace. God could not fairly protect them, and not protect other nations, if neither were following His advice. If God had done this He would have been unfair towards other people and nations. The same principles applied to everyone. If they were in a covenant relationship with God, and followed the laws God had given to help them, then God could bless them.

Yeshua could have set the Jews free from the power of the Romans, but as always, He went straight to the root of the problem; that they were living in sin. If they had accepted the call of repentance as a people, God could have carried out the plan for them. God would have ensured that they had their liberty as He initially planned for them when they entered the promised land several years earlier. The Jews had forgotten that they were in captivity to Rome because of their sins, and they expected the Messiah to come and set them free regardless of their behaviour, but God never gave them such a promise. If they were living ungodly lives, as were the other nations, they would not receive any

advantage above other nations. Thus, Yeshua did not contradict the conditions God required in order that the Jews could receive freedom from their enemies. Yeshua proved that He was "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8, Acts 10:34-35, Psalm 67:5, James 2:9, Isaiah 56:6-7, Romans 2:11, 9:6, 10:12).

God's law and the commandments of men

The Jewish scribes and leaders were still hostile towards Yeshua. They did not want to accept this Man as Messiah. The Jews did not solely follow the laws that Moses had given through "I AM". Over the years, they made their own set of extra rules; their own interpretation of the law of Moses. They determined that when Yeshua did not keep their extra, man-made rules, he was contradicting "I AM" and the laws given to them through His prophet Moses. But Yeshua deliberately did not observe these man-made laws as they misrepresented the true law. Instead, He proclaimed to their great horror, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness" (Luke 11:39), "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matthew 15:3). By saying this, Yeshua was in harmony with the Scriptures because Moses had told the Israelites, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Yeshua maintained that the man-made laws they had added, distorted the commandments God had given them, and the result was that they actually broke God's Ten Commandments. The underlying principle of brotherly love which lay behind the commandments, was removed in their exercise of religion. They were preoccupied with the small and exacting details they had invented themselves, while the main precepts of the moral law were constantly broken. Furthermore they maintained that they were representing God when forcing people to keep these extra regulations. To make matters worse they were lying about Yeshua, violating the ninth commandment. They even planned to murder Him which violated the sixth commandment. "Did not Moses give you the law?" He asked them. They were looked upon as upright by the majority, but they were being exposed as worse than everyone else. The Jewish leaders were close to losing their grip on the people. Yeshua enquired, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?" (John 7:19).

The fourth commandment, to keep the seventh day Sabbath holy, as a "covenant day", had also been broken for the benefit of these extra rules. They had made so many restrictions on this day that everyone dreaded it. "I AM", the LORD Himself, said that it should be "a delight" and a day of recreation for the people, so that they could be free from their work, and have communion with the Creator and enjoy the creation. Instead, the whole purpose of this day was lost, and people were restricted from walking too many steps, and observing several other fanatical laws which were added to the Sabbath requirements. The mixing of God's commandments with human laws and traditions totally distorted God's intentions, and hid His true character. Thus the Sabbath commandment was broken weekly, even though the people thought they were keeping it.

The scribes and the Pharisees tried in vain to find something from the law of Moses to accuse Yeshua of. He had not broken any of the commandments given by "I AM". The more they tried, the more angry they became when they failed. Yet there were many who lied and distorted things He had said, and so these lies became their main charge against Yeshua.

Yeshua continued to perform miracles, and chose seventy disciples whom He sent out to heal the sick and teach the people about His mission. There were also twelve disciples who stayed particularly close to Yeshua, and were by His side most of the time. They too were expecting Yeshua to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jews and deliver them from the Romans.

The Jewish leaders had already started their campaign to stop this Messiah, who had become a much greater problem than any before Him. To convince the people that He was a liar, they planned to make it appear as if Yeshua had broken the law. They determined to convince the people He was teaching false doctrine, that disagreed with the writings of Moses and the other prophets.

I AM

Why should the people believe Him? How could Yeshua contradict the highly esteemed rabbi's, to whom the interpretation of the law was entrusted by all? Yeshua did not have their official approval to run His ministry, which, in the eyes of the leaders, made Him a rebel. Yet they could not stop the people's curiosity about this Man. He was doing such great miracles, and there were even rumours that He walked on water. Who was He?

Yeshua had little time left before His ministry was to close - and it would close in a most brutal and unexpected way. Again when He was outside the temple, He drove out those who were polluting it with their trade. When He then entered the temple and began teaching the people, the Jewish leaders came to stop Him. This was their territory, their temple, they were the leaders of the Jewish nation - and in this place only their authority was supreme. "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" (Matthew 21:23) they questioned loudly so all could hear. Yeshua did not answer; but they knew the answer as He had already told them before.

Yeshua maintained that He could offer eternal life to those who held on to his teachings (John 8:51). However, they continued to accuse Him, because they thought He claimed superiority to even their forefather Abraham, and the proph-

ets. Then, He told them something that frightened many of them. He had said it before, and now He reiterated it. The Man who called Himself the Son of God astonished the people once again. He claimed that He existed before Abraham, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58). The word Yeshua used was Ego Eimi, which was the name of "I AM". He continued, "for if ye believe not that I am (Ego Eimi, "I AM") he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24).

"I AM"? It was "I AM" who had shown Himself in the burning bush to Moses, who had appeared in a pillar of cloud above the Ark of the Covenant, and in the pillar of fire which led them from their exodus out of Egypt. It was He who had dwelt in the great temple that Solomon built. It was He who had given the services to the Sanctuary, who had visited Abraham, and been with Isaac and Jacob. Could this Man really be the great "I AM"?

The Jews, who had just accused Him of being demon possessed, did not hesitate. This time Yeshua had gone too far, and they decided He had to die for blasphemy. Immediately, in utter fury, "took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." (John 8:59). Only by a miracle did Yeshua escape. He offered them eternal life and He taught them the reason for the law, so they could be freed from all evil. Everywhere He travelled, to every town and city, He cured the people from all diseases and mental disorders. So why was this peaceful and compassionate Man such a threat to the authorities? He threatened the power of the leaders and the wisdom of the learned. He threatened the governments who enforced oppressive laws, and His preaching threatened those who wanted to continue in their sins.

Publicly, they accused Him of being a Samaritan, a liar, possessed by demons and a transgressor of the law. Nobody could explain away His miracles and His control over the very laws of nature, but their greatest attack on Him, was to claim that it was an evil power that inspired His miracles. They made black to be white, and white to be black. Now He was accused of working with Satan himself. This frightened many people into withdrawing from Yeshua. Was it not safer to listen to the leaders? Did they not have experience and wisdom enough to correctly assess Him? And were they not more educated, and much older and wiser than Yeshua?

Yeshua said He had not come to "destroy the law, or the prophets:", but to "fulfil". Several years earlier, "I AM" told the prophet Jeremiah, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:30-34).

Why had "I AM" come to earth as a Man, and what was He trying to accomplish? Why did He not come as a king with authority instead of a poor Man from one of the Jews' most reviled towns? What was His plan? Such questions troubled even the disciples, but they had not yet given up hope that Yeshua, whom they loved and believed in, would one day regain control of their country. John, who baptized Yeshua, called Him "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Why did John compare their coming King with a lamb which was sacrificed in the Sanctuary service? Yeshua tried to explain all of these things to them, but they never could quite understand.

Lazarus

Yeshua claimed that He could give eternal life to those who believed in Him. An allegation which had been ridiculed, and branded Him a blasphemer yet again. Nevertheless, Yeshua was not lured into proving Himself in a futile attempt to justify Himself. He offered the people evidence of His identity so they could believe that it really was possible for them to receive eternal life. Something that should have been glad tidings for everyone. One of Yeshua's friends, Lazarus, had died while Yeshua was with His disciples. He received word that Lazarus was sick, but to the disciples' surprise, Yeshua did not hurry to his aid. In fact, He did not depart for another two days. He told His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." When they failed to understand His meaning, He told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead." (John11:11-14). When Yeshua arrived Lazarus had been dead in the grave for

four days. Many of the Jews had come to grieve with the two sisters of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. Yeshua again claimed to possess power to give life, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" (John 11:25). "Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him" (John 11:38-45).

Yeshua was already past His thirty-third year, and it had been three years since He left His home and His employment to start out on His ministry. From the beginning He had met with incredible resistance, but He still drew greater crowds than any other speaker ever had. Even His compassion towards the sick did not change their opinion; the leaders had made their decision - He had to be removed. Already attempts on His life had been made, but had not been successful. According to the law, the Jews were not allowed to perform a public execution without obtaining the consent of the Roman authorities. In order for Him to be publicly executed He must first appear to be guilty, either for breaking Roman law, or for being a threat to the Roman rule. They began to devise a plan to have Yeshua executed, an execution that would be carried out in the name of God. They decided their actions were best for everyone. One of Yeshua's closest disciples had secretly negotiated with them, and for thirty pieces of silver he was willing to lead them to Yeshua, so they could arrest Him and summon Him before the court.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Yeshua spent His last night of freedom with His twelve disciples. It was Passover and as was their custom they gathered for the Passover supper. The supper consisted of lamb and unleavened bread. The disciples had been discussing which of them would be the greatest, and who would have the highest position with Yeshua after He became king. Now they were all gathered around the table.

> "Another cause of dissension had arisen. At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparartion had been made for the service. The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the foot washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciple's part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant" (Desire of Ages, page 644, E.G.White).

The Man who claimed that He was the great "I AM", the Creator of the world, rises from the table. The disciples stare at Him. Yeshua takes a towel and binds it around Himself.

> "After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." Everyone is silent. "Know ye what I have done to you?" He said. Yeshua challenged their thinking, trying to teach them a whole new

> understanding behind the usual concept of striving for worldly great ness, and fighting to climb the ladder of social hierarchy. Earlier He told them that they were all brothers. It was impossible for one of them to attain a higher position without lowering their brothers position. Jesus wanted them to look upon one another as equals. "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:12-17).

As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28). The disciples took part, but it was still new to them. What was the new testament? What was the blood of the new testament?

Yeshua tried to prepare their minds for His soon departure from them. He said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father… If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." The disciples had often expressed their devotion to Yeshua, but He wanted them to fully understand His intention for them, and for all men. "If ye love me, keep my commandments… He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." He warned them that they would meet with great difficulties, but He assured them, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:12,15, 21, 27 & 15:7). He explained to them that they would be persecuted for their faith by their own people. "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you… They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 15:20 16:2-3).

BEFORE THE COURT

Before the court
That night they walked to an area below the Mount of Olives called Gethsemane. Yeshua prayed the entire night in fear and anxiety. He began to dread what He now had to willingly undergo. He said to them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death" (Mark 14:34). Yet still they did not understand what was about to happen, they still hoped that Yeshua was about to become king.

Among the darkness of the trees, a great multitude hastened towards Yeshua and the disciples, brandishing swords and staves. The high priests, the scribes and the church elders had sent them. Among them was the one disciple who had made an alliance with the leaders. Judas, the disciple who betrayed Yeshua, had arranged to give the soldiers a sign as to Who they were to arrest. He approached Yeshua, and kissed Him.

Yeshua said, "Whom seek ye?"
They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."
Jesus answered them, "I am He" (ego eimi)
"As soon then as he had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground."
Then asked He them again, "Whom seek ye?"

And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am (ego eimi) He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way:” (John 18:1-8).

They stepped forward from the crowd and laid hold of Him. The disciples were confused and one of them, by impulse drew his sword to defend Yeshua. The disciple swung the sword towards the high priest’s servant and cut off his ear, but Yeshua “touched his ear, and healed him.” He said, “Put up again thy sword into his place... Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” He turned towards the multitude, “Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.” (Matthew 26:51-55). When the disciples realised the danger of their situation, and that Yeshua had been arrested, they fled in fear, and He was left alone with the mob.

View over the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane. Below. From Gethsemane Christ was taken through the Kidron Valley.

“Over the brook Kedron, past gardens and olive groves, and through the hushed streets of the sleeping city, they hurried Jesus. It was past midnight, and the cries of the hooting mob that followed Him broke sharply upon the still air. The Saviour was bound and closely guarded, and He moved painfully. But in eager

haste His captors made their way with Him to the palace of Annas, the ex-high priest.

Annas was the head of the officiating priestly family, and in deference to his age he was recognized by the people as high priest. His counsel was sought and carried out as the voice of God. He must first see Jesus a captive to priestly power. He must be present at the examination of the prisoner, for fear that the less-experienced Caiaphas might fail of securing the object for which they were working. His artifice, cunning, and subtlety must be used on this occasion; for, at all events, Christ's condemnation must be secured.

Christ was to be tried formally before the Sanhedrin; but before Annas He was subjected to a preliminary trial. Under the Roman rule the Sanhedrin could not execute the sentence of death. They could only examine a prisoner, and pass judgment, to be ratified by the Roman authorities. It was therefore necessary to bring against Christ charges that would be regarded as criminal by the Romans. An accusation must also be found which would condemn Him in the eyes of the Jews. Not a few among the priests and rulers had been convicted by Christ's teachings, and only fear of excommunication prevented them from confessing Him. The priests well remembered the question of Nicodemus, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doest?" (John 7:51). This question had for a time broken up the council, and thwarted their plans. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus were not now to be summoned, but there were others who might dare to speak in favour of justice. The trial must be so conducted as to unite the members of the Sanhedrin against Christ. There were two charges which the priests desired to maintain. If Jesus could be proved a blasphemer, He would be condemned by the Jews. If convicted of sedition, it would secure His condemnation by the Romans. The second charge Annas tried to establish. He questioned Jesus concerning His disciples and His doctrines, hoping the Prisoner would say something that would give him material upon which to work. He thought to draw out some statement to prove that He was seeking to establish a secret society, with the purpose of setting up a new kingdom. Then the priests could deliver Him to the Romans as a disturber of the peace and a creator of insurrection.

Christ read the priest's purpose as an open book. As if reading the inmost soul of His questioner, He denied that there was between Him and His fol-

lowers any secret bond of union, or that He gathered them secretly and in the darkness to conceal His designs. He had no secrets in regard to His purposes or doctrines. “I spake openly to the world,” He answered; “I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.”

The Saviour contrasted His own manner of work with the methods of His accusers. For months they had hunted Him, striving to entrap Him and bring Him before a secret tribunal, where they might obtain by perjury what it was impossible to gain by fair means. Now they were carrying out their purpose. The midnight seizure by a mob, the mockery and abuse before He was condemned, or even accused, was their manner of work, not His. Their action was in violation of the law. Their own rules declared that every man should be treated as innocent until proved guilty. By their own rules the priests stood condemned.

Turning upon His questioner, Jesus said, “Why askest thou Me?” Had not the priests and rulers sent spies to watch His movements, and report His every word? Had not these been present at every gathering of the people, and carried to the priests information of all His sayings and doings? “Ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them,” replied Jesus; “behold, they know what I said.”

Annas was silenced by the decision of the answer. Fearing that Christ would say something regarding His course of action that he would prefer to keep covered up, he said nothing more to Him at this time. One of his officers, filled with wrath as he saw Annas silenced, struck Jesus on the face, saying, “Answerest Thou the high priest so?” Christ calmly replied, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me?”” (Desire of Ages, pages 698-700, Ellen G.White).

The Saviour was again examined, this time by the chief priest Caiaphas. Many who hated the Messiah had lied about Him, but their accusations were too weak to be used to actually prosecute Him. “Though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us

whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" (Matthew 26:60-68).

The Jewish counsel had already decided Yeshua's fate. Now they had to convince the Roman authorities to execute Him. "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor." (Matthew 27:1-2). "And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time" (Luke 23:2-7).

Herod was the man responsible for the beheading of John the Baptist, "And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing." (Luke 23:8-9). The chief priests and the scribes who brought Christ to Pilate, also went with Him to Herod. In order to make sure Herod would not set Yeshua free, they made sure they were present to tell him everything that Yeshua was supposedly guilty of. Herod's curiosity for Yeshua quickly turned to anger when He refused to answer his questions. His request for Yeshua to perform a miracle, in order to prove His claim that He was the Son of God, was also met with silence. "And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate." The Man who claimed to be the Son of God, "I AM", who had taken part in the creation of the earth, animals and man, was now ridiculed

by His own creation. When they dressed Him as a king it was to mock His claim to be the Son of God, the King of kings.

Pilate had attempted to pass off the responsibility by sending the Messiah to Herod. He had hoped that Herod would decide Yeshua's fate, but now he too declined the responsibility. So Pilate was again faced with enormous pressure from the Jewish leaders and many of the people, to sentence Yeshua to death. Their attempts to portray Yeshua as One who revolted against the Emperor himself and against the Romans, worried Pilate. It could be dangerous for him, if his superiors discovered that he had released a rebel. The Jews on the other hand, could not produce any evidence for their accusations, and Pilate doubted they were true. Pilate wanted to set Yeshua free, but was afraid of the consequences. He hoped therefore that the Jews themselves would withdraw their accusations.

"And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him" (Luke 23:13-16). "Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him." Pilate looked at Christ who had done no evil and then at Barabbas who was a murderer. Why did they hate Jesus so intensely? How could they prefer that a murderer be set free? "Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified" (Mark 15:6-15).

The Jews had not only made a legal decision, but also a spiritual one. Yeshua had healed hundreds of people, He defended God's law and encouraged men to

change their lives for the better. When they chose Barabbas, it was a symbolic decision against God and His law, as well as serving an injustice. They had not only taken a stand against Yeshua as a Person, but also against everything He stood for.

“Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him (John 19:1)... “Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head” (Matthew 27:27-30). Although Pilate had allowed Yeshua to be crucified, he still made further attempts to persuade the multitude to withdraw their decision.

Blood flowed down Yeshua’s face from the crown of thorns. Bloodstained from their heavy blows and deformed by the torture He had received, Yeshua was unrecognisable. His whole body was lacerated after being violently whipped, and He could barely stand. “His visage was so marred more than any man” (Isaiah 52:14). “Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the

Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away." (John 19:4-16)

THE EXECUTION

Yeshua had to carry His heavy cross to the crucifixion site Himself. The inhumane treatment He received, the violent whipping, the physical and verbal abuse, and the lack of sleep over 48 hours from well before the night of His arrest, made Him physically weak and exhausted to the point that it was impossible for Him to carry that heavy cross on His own. "And they compeled one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull… And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am

King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said there fore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." (Mark 15:21-22, Luke 23:27 & 32-38, John 19:20-24, Mark 15:29-32).

Through the prophetic words of King David, Jesus expressed how He felt during the execution, "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him… They gaped upon me with their mouths… I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws… For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (Psalm 22:7-19).

YESHUA DIES AND IS BURIED

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent… Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God…

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (Matthew 27:45-54, John 19:31-34).

"And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and

Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus... And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. And he (Joseph) rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed" (John 19:38-42, Matthew 27:60).

The disciples expectations had fallen in ruins. The Man they so sincerely believed was Messiah, had been tortured and now lay dead in His grave. Yeshua had performed so many miracles, healed the sick, raised the dead, and even took control of violent storms. Yet He did nothing to stop His own execution. How

A drawing of soldiers onto an illustration of Christ's tomb in The Garden Tomb. On the right side of the tomb you can see a long earthquake crack. This Bible says there was an earthquake when Christ rose from the dead. The earthquake crack here is evidence of the Bible's credibility.

could this be? Did the prophecies not speak of Him being crowned as King supreme, and ruling throughout all eternity? Was not that what the prophecies said? So how could Yeshua be dead? Had they been mistaken? Was this Man just an impostor? They were all very close Yeshua, not only had He been their Teacher, but also their Friend.

The disciples were devastated. Several of them witnessed the execution, and the mother of Yeshua and several of His friends were close by as He hung on the cross. John even stayed by the cross after Yeshua died, and when the soldier pierced His side, and blood and water gushed out; he witnessed it all.

It was now Sabbath; the very day of rest which He recorded as the fourth commandment. A day that was to remind man of the Creator. When God had finished creation, it is written, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had

made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work..." (Genesis 2:2-3).

The last few days before Yeshua's death had been horrendous for Him. Immediately after He died, His body was taken down from the cross and buried just before sunset that Friday. Thus during Sabbath His body lay in the tomb, resting. When Yeshua created the world, He rested on the seventh day, the Sabbath. When He bought it back, He again rested on the Sabbath; the two greatest events in the history of the earth.

By the time the Sabbath was over and the first day had begun, Yeshua was gone. All that remained in His tomb were the linen burial clothes He had been wrapped in. Not only that, but "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:52-53). The event shocked the Romans, as well as the Jewish leaders and even the disciples themselves. Not only had the body of Jesus disappeared leaving no trace, but many unknown men from another period of time were in Jerusalem, only to disappear again a few days later.

The supernatural events which took place around the Messiah's death did not go unnoticed by the leaders or the people. Darkness engulfed the city when Yeshua was crucified, there was an earthquake, and the curtain in the temple split wide open from top to bottom exposing the Most Holy. Now Yeshua, the Man they thought they had silenced forever, was gone.

To account for all this, the leaders had to come up with some kind of explanation. So they accused Yeshua's disciples of stealing His body. But this was patently impossible, for they themselves had made it impossible. The day after He was crucified, on the Sabbath, "the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch" (Matthew 27:62-66).

THE RESURRECTION

The soldiers who guarded the tomb, told the chief priests the truth about the night Yeshua disappeared, and how another great earthquake had marked the event. “The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men” (Matthew 28:2-4). When the soldiers “were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day” (Matthew 28:12-15).

“And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not

here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you" (Mark 16:1-7).

Mary reached the tomb before the other women, and when she saw that the tomb was empty she hurried to the disciples to tell them what had happened. Apparently she did not enter the tomb with the other two women to hear the message from the angel. Therefore she reported to the disciples, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home" (John 20:2-10). Mary Magdalene had gone back to the tomb with the two disciples. At the same time the other women told the other disciples what they had experienced at the tomb, and about the angel they had seen. "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke 24:11).

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her" (John 20:11-18)

THE WALK TO EMMAUS

Yeshua had so far revealed Himself to several people, but He had not yet shown Himself to the disciples. Even though He had tried several times in the past to explain to them His mission on earth, they still misunderstood. Before the disciples could be sent out as witnesses for Him, He had to teach them more about His mission and about the ceremonies which He had given to the Israelites. What did everything mean? What was the purpose of God sending His Son to be born as a human, just to die? To ensure the disciples understood this was more important than them seeing He was alive. Of what benefit would it be if they saw Him and recognized Him, but did not understand what He stood for or what His mission was?

Two of Yeshua's disciples were walking the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They had heard the claims from those who had seen Yeshua, and how the body of Jesus had disappeared from the tomb. They knew of the accusations against the disciples for supposedly stealing the body, and the strange earthquake and indeed everything that had happened which created so much confusion. As they walked they were sad, discussing these strange events, when another Man began walking with them. He asked them, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in

Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:17-47).

Part 4
The SIGNIFICANCE

"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

Psalm 85:10 & 11.

THE GREAT QUESTION

Most people know that the Ark of the Covenant exists, but where is it's hiding place? The most incredible part of this discovery is not the Ark itself, but the blood of the Messiah that flowed from His pierced side down through a crack at the base of the cross, and was sprinkled onto the Ark. Was His blood really sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, and if so, what does it all mean? What did it symbolize and what was fulfilled?

Many Christians who have some understanding of the Bible, think that when the word "gospel" is used, it is solely talking about the books Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the four "gospels." But the words of Paul tell us otherwise, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them..." (Hebrews 4:2).

Who is Paul referring to when he says, "them"? If we read the earlier verses of the chapter, we see that he is talking about the Israelites wandering in the desert in the time of Moses. We know then that when we talk about the gospel which was given to "them", Paul was referring to several lessons once given to the Israelites. For example, the Sanctuary service, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary..." (Psalm 77:14). They also heard the gospel through the Passover, but the details of the plan of salvation were outlined in the sanctuary service.

The Lord wanted to teach the true nature of His mission and why He came. Jesus showed this by the lessons He taught after His resurrection. He used the Scriptures (The Old Testament) to explain and support His mission, so that His disciples would be able to explain to others who He was, and what His mission

was to the world. He did this by pointing them to the prophets of the Old Testament. By this He revealed just how significant The Old Testament is, and how important it is, to use it to interpret His mission.

He began by explaining to the disciples His mission from the books of Moses. He explained everything about the plan of salvation from these Old Testament books, just as the New Testament is used by Christians today. Therefore one cannot say that The Old Testament holds a different message from the New Testament.

By studying the Old Testament, one gets a clearer and more balanced view than if one only concentrates on the New Testament. Several of the prophecies in The Old Testament are being fulfilled in our day, and therefore are very important for this generation. "...the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." (2 Timothy 3:15-16). This was written by Paul before there was any "New Testament". Concerning the old scriptures, Jesus said, "...and the scripture cannot be broken..." (John 10:35). The Lord tries to draw us to Him through His word, while the religious world attach themselves to human teachers and leaders often just as the Jews did in the time of Christ.

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead..." (Luke 24:44-46).

We will now take a closer look at the Scriptures Christ might well have opened up before them when He explained why He was to die, what His mission was and who He is. Only then might we understand more fully the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant and the death of Christ. Particularly, we must find out what all this means to us today.

THE WAR IN HEAVEN

Let us first look at the most elementary teachings. We must first go all the way back to the very foundation of the gospel, and begin building from there. Why did Yeshua have to die in order to offer man forgiveness and everlasting life? Why did He tell everyone from the days of Adam to sacrifice innocent animals?

The Bible tells us that there are principalities and powers in the universe (Ephesians 3:10, 1 Peter 3:22, Colossians 1:16). Thus there are probably many worlds in the universe, and in Hebrews 1:2 we are told God created the "worlds" (plural) by His Son. The word of God says that the Father and the Son are as one. Lucifer was only a created being, created by the Father and the Son.

Lucifer then revolted against God. Isaiah 14:12-15 tells us that Lucifer wanted to be as great as God, and therefore greater than Christ. Lucifer was opposed to God's universal law, and claimed that He was unrighteous. What could God do?

He could have sentenced Lucifer to an immediate death, and the earth would have been saved from it's fall. But the Bible tells us that there is many worlds in the universe. What would they have thought if God annihilated Lucifer just because he questioned the government of God? The result would have been obedience to the law of God, but only out of fear rather than adoration and love, and not because it was right, just, and for their own protection.

Forced obedience because of fear would inevitably have led to another rebellion sometime in the future. The entire universe would have been in constant danger.

God had no choice if He was to let all His intelligent created beings maintain the free will He created them with. He had to let them see for themselves where disobedience against His universal law would lead to. This was necessary so that all the principalities and powers in the unfallen worlds would support His law, because it is love and righteousness.

John tells us that sin is a synonym for breaking God's law (1 John 3:4). Sin had never been a problem before. We can assume that the Father and His Son had warned their whole creation against Lucifer's new philosophy as well as his methods. All the angels, the principalities and the powers had to make a choice. Either they had to believe the Creator God or the created archangel Lucifer. Everyone was warned about Lucifer, even Adam and Eve, the father and mother of our race.

Lucifer's name was changed to "Satan", and by rebelling against God he lost his position in heaven and became even more rebellious and eager to revolt. Of all principalities and powers in the various worlds, there was only one that chose to believe Satan and oppose God's law of love, and that was our planet earth.

According to Genesis, the first book of the Bible, the Lord had already explained to Adam and Eve the consequences of choosing sin; to lose eternal life. If sin is not stopped it will infect other innocents. So God had to make such a rule for the whole universe. Imagine if all creatures who sinned were allowed to live for eternity. Through the generations, we have witnessed how sin has destroyed our entire world. Murders, massacres, torture, human sacrifices, incest, child prostitution, suicide, fear, depression, hunger, catastrophes, brutal wars and every manner of evil exists today and is increasing beyond belief.

We have all experienced the results of sin and can easily understand why God did not want the whole universe to suffer that way throughout eternity. There is no freedom in sin as Satan claimed. There is no freedom in being scared to go out of the house at night. There is no freedom in being robbed, or exposed to rape, incest or murder. It is not freedom to be deceived by those nearest and dearest to you. Freedom is to be safe and happy forever.

The Lord had warned Adam and Eve, but they chose to believe Satan's definition of freedom. When Christ was on earth as a human, He said many times that he who committed sin, was a slave and servant to sin (John 8:34). Sin is captivity.

An entire planet placed itself on Satan's side, but God's word concerning the consequences remained the same. We can read in Genesis 3:22 that Adam and Eve, after their sin, were no longer granted the right to eat of the tree of life which gave them everlasting life. Thus they became destined to die. A quarantine was established, isolating earth from the rest of the universe, and the earth lost access to the inhabitants of the other worlds. The planet which one time had been in harmony and freedom with other worlds, was now condemned to captivity and loneliness in its own galaxy, without any opportunity to contact other planets. That was the only way to protect the rest of the universe from the influence and wickedness of mankind and the effects of sin. God and His Son were devastated. Man was their creation, and it must have been infinitely worse for them, than it is for us when our children rebel against us.

In 1 Corinthians 4:9 we are told that the world became a spectacle to the other worlds. The people of earth could only blame themselves for the misery they had endured, because they chose, along with Satan, to use their free will to oppose God and His law of love and peace. They had to accept the consequences of their own decisions. All the beings of the other worlds who chose loyalty to God, could now see the fruits of Satan's ideology on earth. Imagine how it would have been, for a world without sin to witness the consequences of sin for the very first time. Who would have predicted that the consequences would be so terrible? Understandably they were relieved they had followed God instead of Satan. We can imagine that they would have revolted against God, if He had changed His mind and allowed sin to continue; one cruelty after another, throughout eternity. Who would want that misery? All who had come close to doubting God, were now convinced of His righteousness. The universe would no longer doubt God's love for their welfare, which is His motive for having a law against sin.

The Father and the Son who were devastated by man's choice, wanted to give man a chance to be redeemed, and a plan of salvation was soon to be put into practice. The Bible tells us that God is righteous and that the law is righteous.

God did not want to change His righteousness, because why would something that is already perfect and righteous need to be changed?

The Creator had only two alternatives if He was to restore everlasting life to mankind. God and His Son could remove the law itself, because if there is no law there would be no one breaking it. But honestly, would we solve the problems of crime in any country by removing the criminal laws? Think about it, suppose a man commits theft and is sent to prison. Is it the law identifying him as a thief that needs to be removed in order to solve the problem? Or is it the act of stealing that is the problem? Even if the law prohibiting theft was removed, thieves would still continue stealing. It would be senseless to remove the law that protects others, thereby allowing the thief to continue to steal without punishment.

Had God chosen such a senseless solution, then sin would have become legal in the universe. Judging by what had happened here on earth, there would have been war in the universe throughout eternity. God is no liar. He has said that the punishment for breaking the law was death, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

It would not have been an act of love to subject the whole universe to the misery of sin, only to save the people on one planet, so that they could continue to sin, hurting both God and all others in the universe. That would have been grossly unfair to the other worlds, and indeed foolish. The law that exposed the lawbreakers as sinners, was under no circumstances to be removed, either in heaven or in earth. It has to be this way to protect the universe.

In conclusion, since breaking the law leads to death, the only possibility God had to make peace between the law breaker, the law, and Himself, was that the righteous and unchangeable law had to be fulfilled. For, "hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?"

THE FIRST OFFERINGS

The plan

Satan disguised himself, and tricked Adam and Eve into choosing to break God's commandments. Despite being thoroughly warned, they still allowed themselves to be tricked into disobeying God. Later, when they fully realised the problems they had caused, they both deeply regretted their rebellion.

All hope seemed to be lost. Adam and Eve's mistake pressed hard upon them. When their only outlook for the future was death, a great promise came from the LORD to this frightened and saddened couple. The promise was given, accompanied by a curse upon the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). They caught sight of hope and were later instructed in the entire plan of salvation.

According to the Bible it was God who diversified the languages. Although paganism has been the religion of China for decades, the God of the Bible and His truth is hidden in their language.

Here the word `tempter` is formed out of the following words: Secret + man + garden + (alive) = devil. Devil + trees + cover = Tempter.

As it was from the beginning, up to the point when Adam and Eve sinned, the tree of life was accessible. But now, God had to do as He had said. God's commandments were still valid, and had to be enforced. The LORD said, "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Under no condition would He invite sin to be a part of eternity. It would be as inconceivable as sending a child molester into a kindergarten. "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever". So Adam and Eve lost their immortality.

What did God's plan of salvation consist of, if either the law, or what it demanded, had to be abolished? The penalty resulted in sinful mankind not being able to eat from the tree of life and live forever. So to make it possible for sinful man to have access to heaven and eternal life, two of the following things had to happen:

1) Since the law could not be removed, it's demands had to be fulfilled. Therefore, as the law demanded, someone had to die for the sin that had been committed. "The transgression of God's law made it necessary for Christ to die a Sacrifice, and thus make a way possible for man to escape the penalty, and yet the honour of God's law be preserved." (Christ in His Sanctuary, page 20. Ellen White).

2) The sinner still could not be invited to heaven and into eternity if he continued to break the law. So the sinner also needed help to stop sinning.

The sinner needed One who could deliver him from his punishment and from his evil desires. The plan was, that a Substitute was to take the sinner's place, and then the offender was to be helped to live according to the "law of liberty" and eventually be free to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (James 1:25, Revelation 22:14).

The Son of God

Who was it that posessed the desire and ability to take upon Himself the punishment for every single human being? An angel? An inhabitant from one of the

other worlds? The value of the Substitute had to be equal with the demands of the law. Who could side up with billions of men and women on one side of the scale, and balance the demands of the law and justice? There was only One. The Creator and giver of the law Himself.

"Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world.

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force.

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2)

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal" (Romans 16:25, R.V.). It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but

have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Lucifer had said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; ...I will be like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:13, 14) But Christ, "being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:6, 7, R.V., margin).

This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father's side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father's hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing." (The Desire of Ages, page 22, E.G.White).

Sacrificing of animals

Why were the people told to sacrifice animals when "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"? (Hebrews10:4) The sacrificial system, which the people were told to follow when they had sinned, was symbolic. "A system was then established requiring the sacrificing of beasts, to keep before fallen man that which the serpent made Eve disbelieve, that the penalty of disobedience is death." (Christ in His Sanctuary, page 20. Ellen White).

The law could not be abolished, and therefore Jesus had to die as our Substitute. If God abolished the law and it's demands, Christ as well as those who rejected His sacrifice, would not need to die. "By the offering of blood, the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed the guilt of his transgression, and expressed his faith in Him who was to take away the sin of the world; but he was not entirely released from the condemnation of the law." (Patriarchs and Prophets, Ellen G. White, p.355). Most people know the story of Adam and Eve's two sons, Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-15). Abel brought an animal sacrifice, but Cain offered vegetables on the altar, despite knowing that God had told him to sacrifice animals. When Cain brought forth a sacrifice of vegetables, which does not have life or contain blood, it was a denial that "the wages of sin is death". By requiring the death of an animal, God was showing the sinner the cruel consequences of sin. They would see that, "This lamb has to die because I have broken the law. It should have been my life that ended, not the life of this little lamb. But thanks to the true Sacrificial Lamb who took

my punishment, I can go free." By looking at the innocent lamb on the altar it would make them think of how serious the sin they had committed really was, and the consequences of it. Then man could understand the seriousness of sin and receive help not to repeat it.

Cain did not want to recognise this symbolism. He did not acknowledge the requirements of the law which says that the sinner has to die for his sin. "But unto Cain and to his offering He (God) had not respect" (Genesis 4:5), because, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." (Proverbs 28:9). Cain disregarded the law, and furthermore, he denied that someone had to die to fulfil the law's demands. Consequently, he was rejecting the sacrifice that the Messiah was to make.

The knowledge of the law and of the sacrificial system, was given to man in the beginning. As time went by and human nature became more and more corrupt, much of this knowledge disappeared. God had to again and again instruct men in the law and the plan of salvation. In all imaginable ways God revealed His love to them, a love so great that "He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). Because he believed this, "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..." (Hebrews11:4).

*FAITH: It is significant to understand what the Bible means by the word faith and "believeth". The definition of this word is not only to believe in the existence of Christ, for, as James writes, "the devils also believe..." (James 2:19). The faith the Bible mentions is complete trust, as described in Hebrews 11. We have to believe in what Christ stands for, His rule and His law, and have a complete confidence in that He does righteousness. Then we "believeth" in Him.

JESUS WON THE POWER TO FORGIVE

If the Messiah had not died on the cross, He could not have offered us forgiveness. The greatest pleasure our Saviour received because of His suffering, was to be able to offer us forgiveness. Many still feel that it is too difficult to go to God when they have sinned, but the Bible says, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.” (Psalm 103:13). To help us understand His forgiving love, Yeshua told the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. He also said, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” (Isaiah 49:15). Jesus is able to forgive us. He has “bought our sin” by paying with His own life. “For ye are bought with a price...” (1 Corinthians 6:20). He who has overcome death says, “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” (Revelation 1:18).

We must never be afraid to go to God when we have done something which is against His will. The one who does not want us to go to God, is Satan. He knows that when we go to the LORD with our sin, He will forgive us, and the devil will eventually loose his power over us. When Satan has caused someone to stumble, he does all he can to prevent them from going to God to confess the sin. We must never wait to go to God when we have fallen. Otherwise the wound will remain untreated and continue to ache, and Satan will maintain his power

over us. He will, “open their eyes, …to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins...” (Acts 26:18). We have to accept God the way He is, a loving and guiding Father, and not a unfair judge. What He does is out of love. Has He not greatly proved His love for us? Our lives were so valuable to Him that He sent His own Son to die for us.

Christ cannot take our sins with Him on the cross if we have not handed them over to Him. “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” (Ezekiel 18:31-32). With true joy, as when a lost son returns to his father, He receives the sinner and takes the burden away from him. “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.” (Psalm 103:8) “...for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.” (Psalm 9:11). “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (Psalm 34:19).

We can never of ourselves be deserving of the forgiveness of God. It is impossible. All we can do is to regret sincerely, and seek Him. Our attitude should be as King David’s, “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD” (Psalm 32:59). “Deliver me from all my transgressions” (Psalm 39:9) Then we can be happy. “Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness” (Psalm 30:12).

We must not take back our guilt when we have handed it over to Christ. People are always taken up with what they have been and what they have done, but when we have given our sins to the LORD, He has promised, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Hebrews 8:12). We can safely put everything behind us and start a new life in Christ. He will not form a new character in us without first removing the old one. “Know ye not that a little leaven (sin) leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.” (1 Corinthians 5:6-7). Satan wants us to remember our sins even after we have given them to the Saviour. Then he can discourage us, and by looking at our old sins instead of at Christ, it is easier for Satan to make us stumble again. We must never doubt Christ’s forgiveness. Neither must we doubt His promises

for, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” (Psalm 103:12). The power to forgive belongs to the LORD. He will do for us as He did for Joshua when Satan was “standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” (Zechariah 3:1-4).

THE PLAN OF SALVATION SHOWN THROUGH PASSOVER.

After several cries for help, the LORD delivered His people from the hand of the Egyptians. Moses came several times to Pharaoh with the appeal to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh resisted and so God let one plague after another fall upon him and his people. Then came the turning point for Pharaoh. The tenth plague took the life of his first-born son. All the Egyptians lost their first-born, both children and adults. The plague struck all who did not do as the LORD had told them. Everyone who chose to ignore the LORD's commands, would lose their first-born.

Again we see the same here as with the first ever sacrifices. It was not the act of sacrificing that saved them, but what the sacrifice represented.

The Israelites were instructed by God, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep,

or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." (Exodus 12:1-14).

"The Passover was to be both commemorative and typical, not only pointing back to the deliverance from Egypt, but forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin. The sacrificial lamb represents "the Lamb of God," in whom is our only hope of salvation. Says the apostle, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." 1 Corinthians 5:7. It was not enough that the paschal lamb be slain; its blood must be sprinkled upon the doorposts; so the merits of Christ's blood must be applied to the soul. We must believe, not only that He died for the world, but that He died for us individually. We must appropriate to ourselves the virtue of the atoning sacrifice.

The hyssop used in sprinkling the blood was the symbol of purification, being thus employed in the cleansing of the leper and of those defiled by contact with the dead. In the psalmist's prayer also its significance is seen: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Psalm

51:7.

The lamb was to be prepared whole, not a bone of it being broken: so not a bone was to be broken of the Lamb of God, who was to die for us. John 19:36. Thus was also represented the completeness of Christ's sacrifice.

The flesh was to be eaten. It is not enough even that we believe on Christ for the forgiveness of sin; we must by faith be constantly receiving spiritual strength and nourishment from Him through His word. Said Christ, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life." John 6:53, 54. And to explain His meaning He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Verse 63. Jesus accepted His Father's law, wrought out its principles in His life, manifested its spirit, and showed its beneficent power in the heart. Says John, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14. The followers of Christ must be partakers of His experience. They must receive and assimilate the word of God so that it shall become the motive power of life and action. By the power of Christ they must be changed into His likeness, and reflect the divine attributes. They must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or there is no life in them. The spirit and work of Christ must become the spirit and work of His disciples.

The lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs, as pointing back to the bitterness of the bondage in Egypt. So when we feed upon Christ, it should be with contrition of heart, because of our sins. The use of unleavened bread also was significant. It was expressly enjoined in the law of the Passover, and as strictly observed by the Jews in their practice, that no leaven should be found in their houses during the feast. In like manner the leaven of sin must be put away from all who would receive life and nourishment from Christ. So Paul writes to the Corinthian church, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump. . . . For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8.

Before obtaining freedom, the bondmen must show their faith in the great deliv-

erance about to be accomplished. The token of blood must be placed upon their houses, and they must separate themselves and their families from the Egyptians, and gather within their own dwellings. Had the Israelites disregarded in any particular the directions given them, had they neglected to separate their children from the Egyptians, had they slain the lamb, but failed to strike the doorpost with blood, or had any gone out of their houses, they would not have been secure. They might have honestly believed that they had done all that was necessary, but their sincerity would not have saved them. All who failed to heed the Lord's directions would lose their first-born by the hand of the destroyer.

By obedience the people were to give evidence of their faith. So all who hope to be saved by the merits of the blood of Christ should realize that they themselves have something to do in securing their salvation. While it is Christ only that can redeem us from the penalty of transgression, we are to turn from sin to obedience. Man is to be saved by faith, not by works; yet his faith must be shown by his works. God has given His Son to die as a propitiation for sin, He has manifested the light of truth, the way of life, He has given facilities, ordinances, and privileges; and now man must co-operate with these saving agencies; he must appreciate and use the helps that God has provided—believe and obey all the divine requirements." (Patriarchs and Prophets. Ellen G. White. Page 277-279).

Much of what the LORD taught the Israelites about the plan of salvation through all these symbols, He had taught their ancestors before them, but, "Through long intercourse with idolaters, the people of Israel had mingled many heathen customs with their worship."
(Christ in His Sanctuary, page 22. Ellen White).

Now He reminded them of what they had forgotten while they lived in the pagan land of Egypt. The fact that they worshipped a golden calf at Mount Sinai, reveals how they took part in idol worship while in Egypt.

Messiah was not to die at Passover because of the Exodus. The Exodus and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were given to them to symbolize a plan laid out, "before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20). These symbols pointed forward to the time when Jesus was to die and free those that believe on Him from the slavery and bondage of sin, which was the curse of the law. The Passover

feast contained many symbols. For example, it predicted the time of the year when Jesus was to die. We find also many of the symbols in the Passover celebration also used in the earthly sanctuary service. There is no doubt that the Passover was to represent Jesus' death as our Deliverer.

THE END OF THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY SYSTEM

All the offerings in the sacrificial system and in the sanctuary service symbolized Yeshua, but this did not mean that He was to die every time a sacrifice was offered during the different times of the year. “Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world...” (Hebrews 9:25-26).

The prophet Daniel, who God saved when he was thrown into a den of lions, prophesied of the Messiah, “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off... And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...” (Daniel 9:26-27). When the true sacrificial Lamb was sacrificed, it was no longer necessary to sacrifice animals. Type had met antitype. The symbol had been fulfilled. There was no longer a need for an earthly sanctuary service either, because it was impossible to continue these services without offering sacrifices. At His death God made sure that this could not be misunderstood, “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom...” (Matthew 27:50-51).

“Since the whole ritual economy was symbolical of Christ, it had no value apart

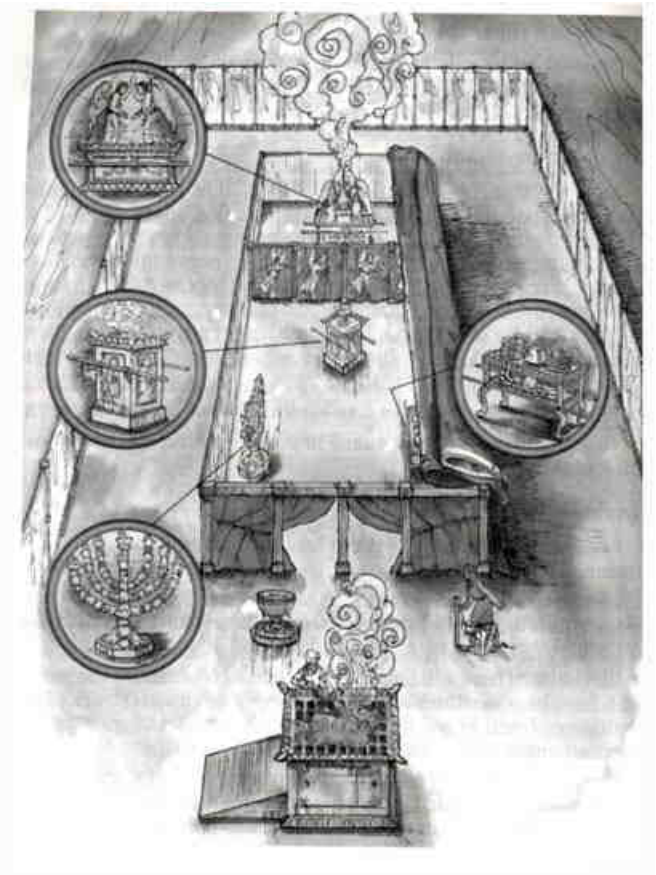


Illustration of the earthly sanctuary

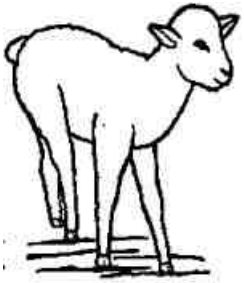
So the priests could enter into the tabernacle, they must wash their hands and feet in a cleansing basin. This stood in front of the sanctuary in the courtyard, where the daily offerings were performed. In the first apartment of the sanctuary, called the Holy (shown in the picture), there were three objects; the Table of Shewbread, the seven-branched Lampstand and the Altar of Incense. Behind the second curtain, in the second apartment, called the Most Holy, stood the Ark of the Covenant, containing the Ten Commandments.

from Him." (Christ in His Sanctuary, page 43. Ellen White).

Let's say that a man bought a copy of a beautiful painting and hung it in the best place in his home. Later on, he was able to buy the original painting. Would he not then replace the copy with the original? When the curtain in the temple was ripped at the Saviour's death, the copy was now replaced with the 'original'. This event represented the end of the earthly Sanctuary services and the end of the entire sacrificial system.

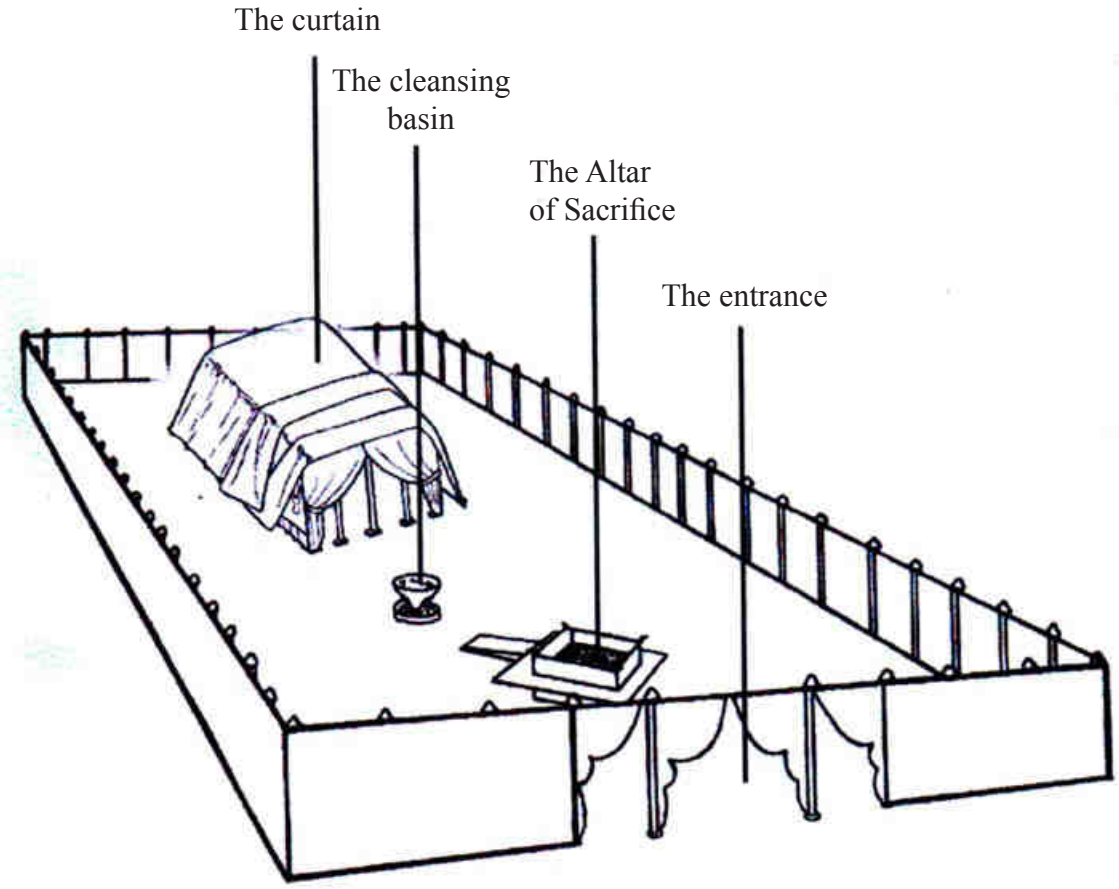
The Most Holy was revealed when the curtain was torn in two. This tearing of the veil signified that Christ has prepared a way for us. The true Sacrificial Lamb had given His life, providing the remedy (His blood), which had the power to take us into the Most Holy. The Most Holy contained the law and the promise,

"And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them..." (Ezekiel 11:19-20).



"Show me thy ways, O LORD..." (Psalm 25:4), "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary..." (Psalm 77:14).

Firstly we have the sacrifice, or offering. We have no access into the sanctuary without laying our sins on Christ and letting His death on the cross become a personal reality for us. For "without shedding of blood is



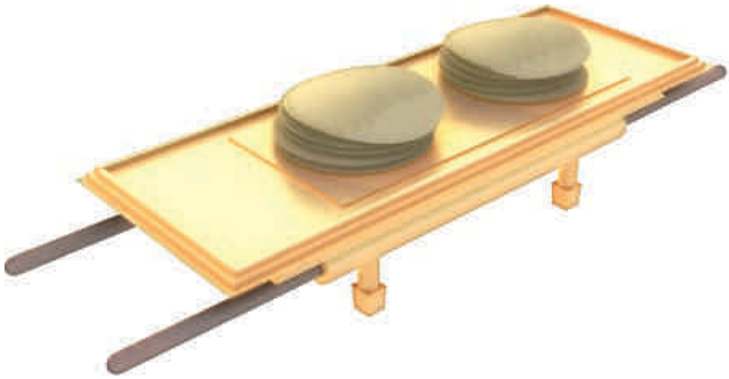
no remission." (Hebrews 9:22).

The cleansing basin symbolises that we must let the blood of Christ cleanse us. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood..." (Revelation 1:5). When we are cleansed from our sins, we must not take them up again, or we will not be given the opportunity to enter into the Sanctuary. Nobody was allowed to go into the earthly tabernacle without stopping by the cleansing vessel. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh..." (Hebrews 10:19-20).

Inside the curtain, which represents the flesh of Yeshua, we find the key to how a Christian life can be lived. It is there we learn how sin can be overcome. Christ came in the flesh, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14). He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15), for "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren..." (Hebrews 2:17). He taught us how sin must be conquered or totally removed from our hearts. He "condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). Jesus' life on earth shows us how we can live a victorious life, and not sin anymore. In His life, Jesus was "leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:21-22). When we have entered into the Holy Place, we must follow His example that we do not fall back into the captivity of sin.

The Holy Place contains three objects symbolizing the power and strength offered to us that we may live in peace with the law in the Most Holy.

The Table of Shew-bread represents Christ and His Word which we must symbolically "eat" that it can become a part of us. We recognise the same symbol as we found in the Pass-over celebration. "I



am that bread of life" said Jesus (John 6:48), and what was Jesus? "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14). Jesus gave us an example as a Man. When the devil tempted Him, He used the Scriptures, the Word of God, to expose the deception. He also said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29).

The next object we find in the Holy Place is the lampstand, whos flames were never to be extinguished. It represented God's church and, those who belong to His congregation. The perpetually-burning oil represents the Holy Spirit. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). Here we find much of the significance with the laws of the LORD about clean and unclean food. As a reason for giving these laws He said, "For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy..." (Leviticus 11:44).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1).

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1Corinthians 3:17). The food we eat gives nutrition to the brain cells. If we eat food that God has warned us against eating, our brain will be malnourished, reducing the influence of the Holy Spirit over us. If we are often sick, we are also little help to God and our fellow human beings. This is not the Creator's will for us.

God has given directions on how we can live healthy lives. This principle is mentioned in the story of Daniel and his friends. They were steadfast towards

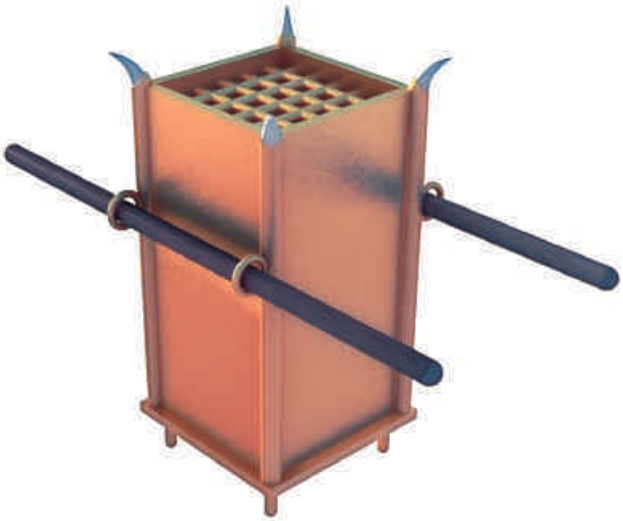
God's laws regarding what they could and could not eat, and as a result they "appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom" (Daniel 1:15-17).

The oil that always burns is the Holy Spirit, "It is the spirit that quickeneth..." (John 6:63). After Jesus was baptised, the Spirit came over Him. He did not need to be cleansed and baptised as He was without sin, and John who baptised Jesus said, "I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matthew 3:14). Jesus was not baptised because He needed it for Himself, but because He was "leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps". Jesus was also led by the Spirit when He was tempted in the wilderness. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities" (Romans 8:26). "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die..." (Romans 8:13). Why can we not live after the flesh? "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7). This was the whole problem; we have sinned. Jesus did not only come to remove our punishment, but to help us to stop being a slave to sin. Instead we can be united with "the perfect law of liberty..." (James 1:25).

Jesus said He would "send him (the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit) unto you" (John 16:7). "...(I)f ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:13-14). What was the problem with the flesh? "It is not subject to the law of God" (Romans 8:7). The solution has to be that the Holy Spirit helps us to keep the law. In this way the law is revealed in our hearts as He promised, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts..." (Hebrews 8:10).

The last object in the Holy is the Altar of Incense, offering "...odours, which are the prayers of saints." (Revelation 5:8). "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God..." (Revelation 8:4). Paul urged us, "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:15). Our prayer life is our communication with the Father. Jesus tells us, "Ask, and it shall be given you", and James tells us to pray for wisdom (James 1:5). Again, Jesus advised us, "rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation..." (Luke 22:46). "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7). There is no reason for us to be short of anything with fan-

tastic promises like these! Jesus was an example for us, "And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray" (Matt 14:23). "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12). "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed... And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly" for "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Luke 22:41-44, Hebrews 2:17).



In order for Jesus to live a life free of sin upon this earth in sinful flesh*, He had to follow the same practice as He had told us to. In this way, He "condemned sin in the flesh... leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (Romans 8:3, 1 Peter 2:21-22). The Man Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and us (1 Timothy 2:5).

The curtain around the Holy and the Most Holy represents Jesus' life of victory over sin in the flesh. Because of this He had peace with God's law. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus..." (Hebrews 10:19). "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16).

*The Greek word "sarx" used in New Testament about the nature of Jesus, means fallen nature.

Many think it is impossible for a human being not to sin, even after conversion. If it is impossible for man not to sin, then it is not our fault when we do sin. Whose fault is it then? According to Satan it is God's fault. This is his main accusation against God. This is also the reason why God's Son came with a fallen nature that He might overcome sin in flesh, disproving Satan's accusation towards God. Satan claimed that God was unjust when He held man accountable, as Satan claimed it was not man's fault that he had sinned. If it really is imposssible for man not to sin, even with God's help, then it isn't our fault when we do sin. If it is not our fault when we sin, then there is no point in asking for forgiveness. But in the Lord's prayer it is written, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12). This tells us that Jesus looks at debt, or guilt, in the same way as He looks at sin. If we say it is impossible for men not to sin, then we must say it is not our debt, or fault, when we do sin. Thus we are denying that we are indebted, or at fault. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins..." (1 John 1:8-9). We must confess that it is our 'fault'. "If we say that we have not sinned (if we say it is not our fault), we make him a liar..." (1 John 1:10).

Jesus came as a human being with a fallen nature to repudiate Satan's accusation towards God, and let the whole universe witness it. This opened the way for us. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." (John 15:22). It is our fault that we sin, and therefore we can ask God for forgiveness.

The same is in force in our society. If a person has murdered another human being, it does not help for him to say it was not his fault. He must take the responsibility for the crime. If a man exercises violence towards another person, it is ludicrous if he should shout, "It is not my fault that I am now going to kill you!" Everyone must be held responsible for their acts. A persons environment, or their upbringing may be the reason for their cruel acts, but that does not in any way excuse the sinner. Many examples show how two persons with the same troubled background can end up walking two completely different paths. One can become a menace to society, and the other feels enough compassion to help people who have experienced the same difficulties. It is not what happens that makes a person, but the way they handle what happens. Even though other

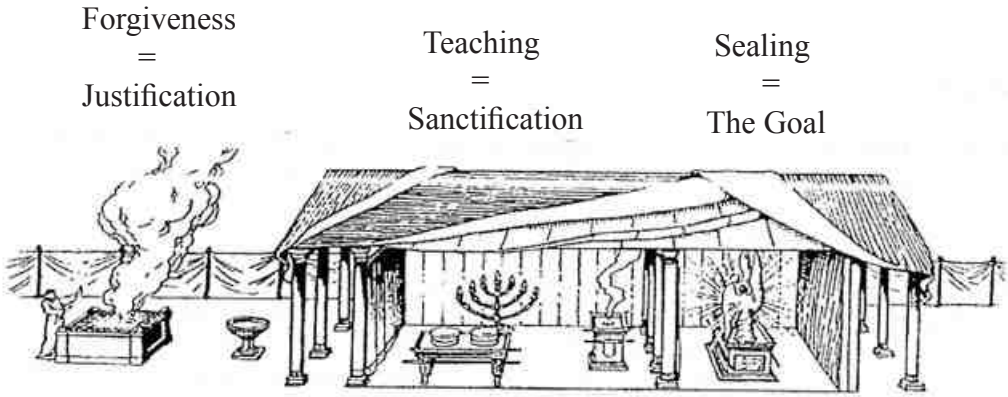
people have done evil toward us, it does not mean we must continue the cycle. With God's help we can stop, and rid ourselves of evil tendencies which hurt ourselves and others, and oppose God. People are quick to excuse and justify themselves. They blame others for their sins. However, when an injustice is done to them, then they feel no doubt about who is guilty. Thus their own logic is destroyed. If no one takes responsibility for their own sins, but agree that others have to, this world will only be led deeper and deeper into misery. If a person does not take responsibility for his wrong acts, he cannot seek conversion from them either, and injustice continues. Therefore it is important to admit ones sin.

Today many Christians choose to continue to live in sin saying "I am not able to stop. I am only human". In this way they blame God and our first parents for their sins. They do not hold themselves responsible, and have made a perfect excuse to continue living in sin. If men do not admit fault, God cannot forgive them or help them, because they have not repented nor do they seek forgiveness for their sins. This is what Jesus came to offer, forgiveness and help for repentance. Due to a false understanding of sin and guilt, many Christians misuse God's name by calling themselves Christians. At the same time they attack children sexually, lie, steal, slander, attack, cheat and commit other injustices to people. The result is that people take a disliking to Christianity. In all this Satan exults. Even the smallest sin is excused with, "it is not my fault that I am sinning, I was born this way", and yes they maintain they are converted and forgiven. Preaching like this is contradictory and confusing, missing the point totally. Often they quote Paul in Romans 7:25, which speaks of a certain situation where Paul kept failing as he tried to keep the law. However, they do not include the following chapter, which gives the solution. In this way Bible texts are taken out of context, supporting a distorted view of Jesus' teachings, and a distorted view of sin and guilt. Thus they feel they can continue in their sin, still claiming Christ's forgiveness, and think that they have everlasting life.

When the curtain in the temple was torn in two, Satan's myth, (that it is impossible for human flesh, even with God's help, not to sin) was torn apart at the same time. Jesus had overcome sin, in the flesh, as a human being. The way towards a life in harmony with the law in the Most Holy was opened for everyone who wished to receive help to live according to God's law. "Stand fast therefore in

the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Galatians 5:1).

Even though Christ has opened the way to the Most Holy by giving us His empowering grace, the sacrificial system also represented other things. But when the temple curtain was torn in two at Christ's death, it primarily represented the end of the sacrificial system.



THE BEGINNING OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

The high priest's responsibility

Jesus is our true High Priest, but He was also the Sacrifice in the Sanctuary service. There was no way into the Holy and further on to the Most Holy, without first entering in through the doorway, past the Altar of Burnt Offering and the cleansing laver. There was only one entrance to the tabernacle. We know that the earthly tabernacle was "the example and shadow of heavenly things," as Moses received the divine command when he was told to erect the tabernacle. He said, "See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." (Hebrews 8:5).

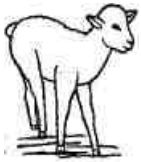
We have mentioned how the objects in the tabernacle are symbolic of the Christian experience, but they are also symbolic of Jesus' service as our High Priest. Jesus was both High Priest and Sacrifice. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place..." (Hebrews 9:12). After He had given His life, completing the sacrifice, He was able to continue the plan of redemption inside the Holy Place in heaven. Again we find the symbols from the first room (the Holy), the Table of Shewbread, the Lampstand with the oil and the Altar of Incense.

These objects symbolize the gracious offer of heaven, and show what Jesus, as

our High Priest does to help us. The Shewbread points to Jesus and God's Word. After the Saviour had been on earth as a human, He made sure that the Word was available for those who searched for Him. The Bible has been smuggled and hidden, burnt and banished, but it has always survived. Today it is available for almost anyone in the world. As our High Priest, Jesus has given us His Word. The Lampstand represents the temple of God and His congregation, "...the church, Which is his body..." (Ephesians 1:22-23). "And he is the head of the body, the church..." (Colossians 1:18). Jesus gave His church the Holy Spirit after He had been in the Sanctuary of heaven and "poured oil on the Lampstand."

Before He could do these things in heaven, He had to finish His work as the Sacrifice on earth. When He had risen from the dead and entered the Holy in the heavenly sanctuary, He could as our High Priest pour oil on the lamps. Therefore He said, "...for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John 16:7). The Altar of Incense symbolises our prayers. Jesus' work as our High Priest is to intercede for us, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Romans 8:34).

The death of Jesus on the cross was the fulfilment of the Altar of Burnt Offering and the cleansing laver in the sanctuary service. "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The death of Jesus on the cross did not complete the plan of reconciliation. The Sacrifice was perfect, but the reconciliation was not finished there. The sin placed on the sin-offerings was carried into the sanctuary by the blood. As the sin was carried into the sanctuary, the sanctuary was now defiled and needed to be cleansed from sin once a year. This happened on the Day of Atonement. "In the sin offerings presented during the year, a substitute had been accepted in the sinner's stead; but the blood of the victim had not made full atonement for the sin. It had only provided a means by which the sin was transferred to the sanctuary." (Patriarchs and Prophets, page 355, E.G.White).



What did the Day of Atonement actually represent?
The earthly Day of Atonement was a combination of all steps of the atonement plan, thus the whole plan of atonement was shown on one day. When we read about the Day of Atonement in Leviti-

cus 16, we learn how many steps there are in reconciliation. Three main steps:

1) Atonement by the sin offering
2) Atonement by the sanctuary
3) Atonement by the scapegoat

Step 1: Atonement by the sin offering. A sin offering was carried forth to die instead of the sinner. “Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil” (Leviticus 16:15). This makes salvation possible.

Step 2: Atonement and cleansing of the sanctuary. Since the sin had been transferred to the sanctuary, atonement had to be made for the sanctuary, and then removed from the sanctuary completely. The “blood was brought in to MAKE ATONEMENT in the holy place” (Leviticus 16:27). “And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary” (Leviticus 16:33).

Step 3: Atonement by the scapegoat. “And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat...” (Leviticus 16:20). “But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to MAKE AN ATONEMENT with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.” (Leviticus 16:10).

We see that these three parts together constitute the whole process of reconciliation. The first part was done at the cross. The whole Bible witnesses to the fact that Jesus was the Sin Offering. The second part, the cleansing of the sanctuary and the Most Holy, was done in the temple in heaven. The prophet Daniel tells us this cleansing would take place after the “two thousand and three hundred days” (we shall soon look closer at this). The third part will be done when our High Priest finishes His work in the Most Holy place in heaven. As shown by the earthly sanctuary service, the sins Satan has been responsible for (by tempting men and women), will be laid on the scapegoat (representing Satan), who will be bound in the bottomless pit (the wilderness) and later destroyed (Leviticus 16:20-21 & Revelation 20:1-3).

The first two parts of the plan of salvation (or reconciliation) do not remove the

sin, but only transfer it:

-firstly from the sinner to the Offering,
-then from the Offering to the Sanctuary,
-and finally from the Sanctuary to the devil, who is finally destroyed in the lake of fire.

(Much of this sin Satan has been responsible for, and he must take the punishment for his own sin.) Only by the third step is sin removed from the universe forever. But why three stages to free the sinner from sin? Why isn't the cross alone enough? If the death of Christ does not take place, the other two parts cannot be fulfilled. The cross is most important, but the work of Christ is more than just dying for us. He also has to complete the rest of the atonement plan. Therefore, as well as "the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2), Christ was also called our "High Priest" (Hebrews 7). If we read of the work of the high priest in the earthly depiction, we can understand what Jesus must do after the cross.

Without the first part of the atonement there is no salvation. Then the sin is transferred to the sanctuary. So what is the purpose of transferring the sin to the sanctuary?

God knows what is right and wrong, and does not actually need to conduct a trial, however, the angels and the inhabitants of other worlds need to know. They have been witnesses to the battle between good and evil and God wants them to understand what is right and why, so they support Him out of love and not force. A universal trial will show all in heaven and other worlds, and us, that God has been just in regard to who are saved and who are not. Satan has depicted the Creator in a false light, and accused Him of being unjust. The plan of salvation will disprove this accusation and reveal the Creator to be more than just.

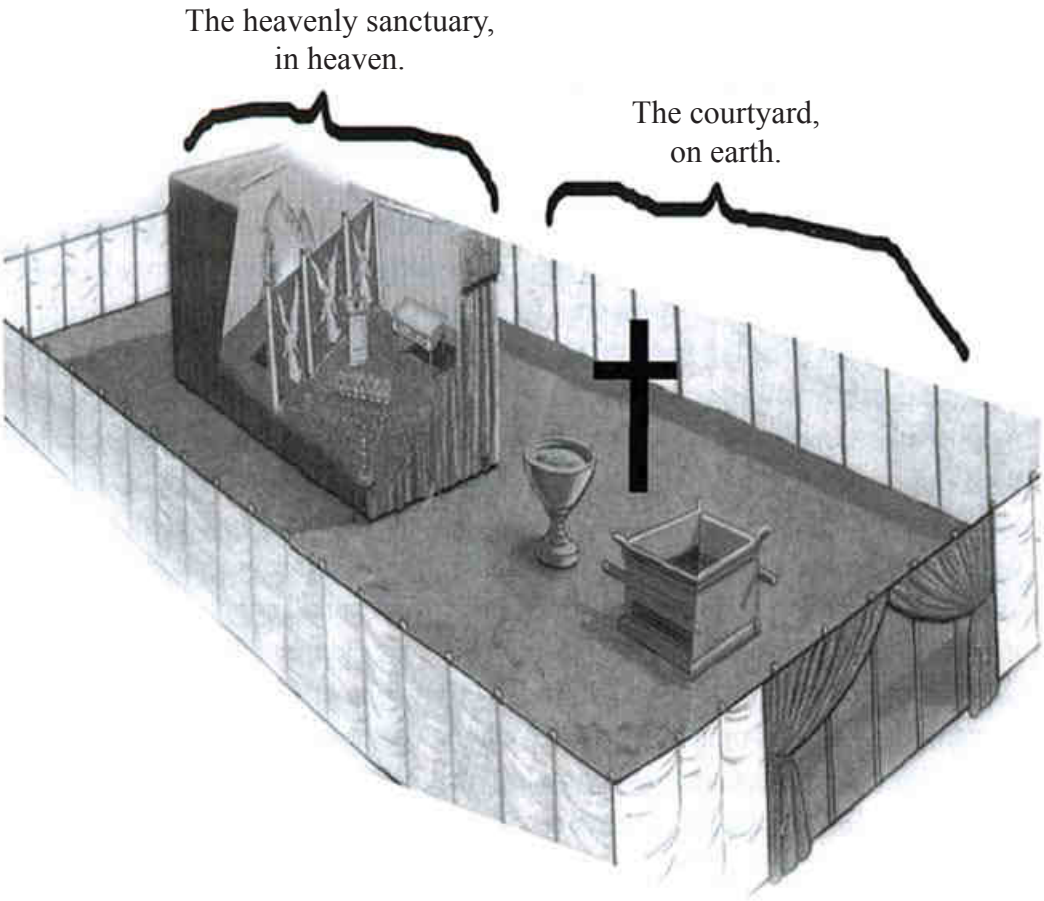
The Bible tells us that our sins are written in a book, "...and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Revelation 20:12). This record has been kept to prevent those who love sin and unrighteousness from entering the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:21). "And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are

there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment." (The Great Controversy, page 422, E.G.White). This investigative trial must take place prior to the second coming of Jesus to make it clear who will go to heaven, and who will die. By studying the book of Daniel (7:10), we will see that the judgement takes place before the second coming of Jesus. Although the sacrificial part of the atonement has been completed, not everyone will receive it. Those who do not sincerely repent of their sins, and acknowledge the law's right to take the life of the transgressor, also do not acknowledge Christ's substitute death. The case of every man who claims to be a follower of Christ will be dealt with, and of some Jesus has said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven..." (Matthew 7:21). Therefore, there must be an investigative judgement. Who has truly regretted their sin? Who's name shall be in The Book of Life, and who's name shall be deleted from it? (Exodus 32:32-33, Psalm 69:29, Revelation 20:12).

During the cleansing of the Sanctuary, Jesus' work as High Priest, is to bring forth His blood as the defence for every repenting individual. When the individual's case has been dealt with, the High Priest will either declare, "I know this person. My blood has cleansed him of sin, and I want him to be where I am" or, "I do not know him". When all cases have been decided, then the sins can be placed upon Satan. He will suffer for being the instigator of these sins, as well as the punishment for his own sins (Leviticus 16:21). All sin has to be atoned for before peace can reign, and Satan and all who have not accepted Christ's sacrifice must atone for their own sins. In this way the plan of atonement will have ensured that all sin has been atoned for, and the demands of the law have been satisfied. When sin has gone through the investigative judgement, then we are completely freed from our debt. In short, this is the plan of atonement, or the plan of salvation. The purpose of these three steps in the plan of atonement, is to fulfill the requirements of the law. The only way this can be fulfilled is for the law-breaker to die, or to separate the sin from the sinner and have Another suffer the penalty.

As we have said, Christ's death on the cross is only a part of the plan of salvation. Although Jesus' work is in the heavenly sanctuary, He did not have to die in

heaven. “For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” (Hebrews 13:11-12). He died outside the heavenly gate (on earth), and “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19).



WHEN DID JESUS GO INTO THE MOST HOLY?

"And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." (Daniel 8:14). When did this period begin? The angel Gabriel said to Daniel, "Seventy weeks are determined…" (Hebrew, 'chathak' which means 'cut off') upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem (see Ezra 7:12) unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease..." (Daniel 9:24-27).

In Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34, as well as several ancient Jewish writings the prophetic interpretation of time is given. The principle is to count one day as one year*. The time prophecy in Daniel 8:14 shows that it would be 2300 'days' before the sanctuary would be cleansed. Jesus therefore entered the Most Holy

after 2300 years. This period of time began when "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" began, which happened in year 457 BC. 2300 years from year 457 BC, counting a day for a year, arrives at 1844 AD (year 0 does not exist). According to the vision of Daniel, we know that "the sanctuary be cleansed" in 1844.

The trial

In 1844 the investigative judgment began, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire... thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:9-10). Seeing as the prophecies described in the verses before verse 7 and 9 take place a long time after the death of Jesus, so we understand that the judgment was set a long time after the cross, but some time before He returns. This confirms Daniel's prophecy being 2300 days, or years in the future.

Many people believe that when Jesus sat down on God's right hand side after His ascension, it took place in the Most Holy place. However, there is no Scriptural basis for this belief. The Bible says, "…and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne..." (Revelation.4:5). These seven lamps refer to the seven-branched lampstand in the Holy Place. The sanctuary service shows clearly that the lampstand was not in the Most Holy, nor was it ever to be placed there. We must consider then that God's throne described in Revelation 4 is in the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. The Word of God gives another confirmation. God's throne was not in the Most Holy before 1844, as Daniel says concerning the judgment that, "...thrones were cast down (also translated 'placed'), and the Ancient of days did sit..." (Daniel 7:9). The throne of God was not in the Most Holy, (the room where the cleansing of the heavenly sanctu-

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**From the Bible, the Jews learned to count years as days. Six working days became six working years. The seventh year was to be a Sabbath year when the earth was to rest. Nothing was to be sown or harvested. Whatever was growing in the field of itself, they were permitted to pick and eat. Eventually this was called 'year-weeks'. A year-week was the same as seven years. In later Jewish literature (eg. in the 'Book of Jubilee') they consistently use the designation of year-weeks to explain periods of time.*

According to the time prophecy, Jesus' official work began in year 27AD, and ended the year 31AD with His is death. Jesus was about 33 years old when He died in 31AD. The reason for the difference is probably because of a mistake made during the changing of our calendars, and thus Jesus was not born in year zero according to our modern calenders. Herod, who reigned in Jerusalem at the time of Christ's birth had died a few years before what today would be known as year zero. So Jesus must have been born a few years before this time. We do know according to Bible prophecy that Jesus was to be "cut off" in year 31AD, when He was about 33 years old.

(One prophetic day = one year. Ezek 4:6 and Num 14:34.
The beginning of the time prophecy is found in Dan 9:25)

ary was to take place), and therefore we know Daniel is describing a time when God's throne was moved (Ezekiel describes wheels on God's throne) for the legal investigation to begin.

As long as Jesus is standing in the Most Holy as our Defence in our legal trial, atonement is being made for our sin. Probation is closed when Jesus leaves the Most Holy, thus no one can make atonement for our sins. Therefore He declares at that moment, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." (Revelation 22:11). The heavenly Ark, from which the earthly Ark was designed, is in the Most Holy in heaven where the investigative judgement takes place. This is where Jesus pleads His blood in the trial, as an atonement for those who have accepted it.

The blood of Jesus was sprinkled on the earthly Ark of the Covenant at the cross, but this could not fulfil the "Day of Atonement", because on the antitypical Day of Atonement in heaven, the Ark in heaven is used. So what did it mean when the blood of Jesus flowed down on to the "copy" here on earth? It was not to represent the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, so what did it represent?

WHAT IS THE ARK OF THE COVENANT?

The Ark of the Covenant was made of two separate pieces – the Ark of the Testimony and the Mercy Seat.

The Ark of the Testimony
The first piece acquired its name in the following manner, "And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee" (Exodus 35:16). What is the Testimony? The Ten Commandments are called "the testimony" (Exodus 32:15), "the tables of stone", "the tables of the testimony" (Exodus 31:18), and the "words of the covenant" (Exodus 34:28). Only when the Ten Commandments, or the Testimony, were placed in the Ark, was the Ark called the Ark of the Testimony. This is the purpose of the Ark; to be the residing place of the Ten Commandments. The Ark in itself is not holy, but the Law is holy, and only when the law was placed in the Ark, did the Ark become a holy object. So this was the first part.

The Mercy Seat
The second part was to be made separate from the Ark. The Mercy Seat was the lid which had one cherubim on each end. It was all made in one single piece.

These two different parts symbolized their different character and purpose. The

Ark was made to house and represent the law, but the Mercy Seat had a different, yet very significant job.

Let us start by looking at the Hebrew word that the English Bible Translations have aptly called "the Mercy Seat". The Hebrew word that refers solely to the Mercy Seat is "Kappôreth" which comes from the word "kâpar". "Kâpar" means, "to make atonement" or, "a place for atonement". In the earthly sanctuary, the Mercy Seat was the place where atonement was made for the people and for the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus Chapter 16). When we understand that the Mercy Seat is by definition a place for atonement, the next step is to understand what atonement is. "To atone" is to pay the penalty, or to settle the account. Since sin is the crime, then atonement must be made for sin.

Within the first part of the Ark of the Covenant, the Ark of the Testimony, is the law, which is the plaintiff. We remember that John writes that "sin is transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). The law is not only the plaintiff, but also the "witness" against the defendant. Paul said "I had not known sin, but by the law" (Romans 7:7). It is the law that reveals the offence, and therefore it is the law that is the witness against us.

As already mentioned, the law already existed before Adam and Eve sinned. The law that was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, was the "example and shadow" (Hebrews 8:5) of what was already in heaven. When man broke the law by being disobedient against God, it

became necessary to add a new part to the Covenant to save man; the offer of a Substitute's blood. Since it is the law that demands the offender's death, it is also the law that must be satisfied. The law must witness that atonement is made, and that the offender is punished.

Now, the only way to "settle the account" or "to atone for sin" is for "the sinner to die" (Romans 6:23). Forgiveness cannot be granted without the account being settled. Paul states in Hebrews 9:22 that, "without shedding of blood is no remission." This tells us that the shedding of blood is the only way to settle the account, or to atone for sin. When we understand that the word "kappôreth", of "kâpar", means "to atone", and that the only valid atonement is blood, we understand that the Mercy Seat was made to receive blood.

Whenever a blood sacrifice was offered to God in the Old Testament, it was poured on or beside an altar which was designed to receive the blood of the sacrifice. The Mercy Seat is therefore by definition an altar, as it was made to receive blood.

If the Scriptures state that, "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12), then only the blood of Jesus Christ can be offered to atone for sinful beings.

Let us sum up the purpose of the two parts to the Ark of the Covenant:
First part: The Ark of the Testimony containing the words of the covenant (this covenant has been broken): God's testimony, and also the witness and the plaintiff.
Second part: The Mercy Seat: the place for the atonement, the altar, where the plaintiff will receive justice, the blood.

We have the words of the covenant (the law which was broken), and we have the additional part which God added to the covenant after sin (the promise of blood from a Substitute - the Messiah). When we join these two together, we have the New Covenant, and when we put the Ark of the Testimony (the law) and the Mercy Seat (the blood of atonement) together we have the Ark of the Covenant. The blood of animals was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, but "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). Therefore, the blood of animals which was sprinkled on the Ark, was not valid for atonement. The law demanded our own blood or Jesus' blood. The Ark of

the Testimony therefore never received the blood it required, before Christ's substituting blood reached the Mercy Seat. We can therefore conclude that the Mercy Seat was designed to receive the only valid atonement, Christ's blood. All the ceremonies which involved sprinkling animal blood, were just to remind the people of the true Sacrificial Lamb, Jesus Christ.

If the Mercy Seat is "a place for atonement" and the only approved atonement is the blood of Jesus, then we can rightly call the Mercy Seat, "a place for the blood of Jesus."

"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." (Psalm 85:10-11).

Witnesses in heaven and witnesses on earth

"And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." (Revelation 11:18-19).

John called Jesus the Word, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory" (John 1:1-14).

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (1 John 5:7). John here explains that there are three in heaven who bear witness of the blood and the water. That means that there are three in heaven who bear witness of the sacrifice of Jesus and His atoning blood. However the event occurred on earth and that is where the physical evidence remains. John says, "there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 John 5:8).

During the investigative judgement, Jesus is standing by the heavenly Ark, by the heavenly law which has been broken, while the case of every individual is considered. He reminds the court of His blood which was freely given to fulfil

the demands of the law, and refers to the “evidences/witnesses on the earth”. “The Word” points down to His blood, “that bear witness in earth” to settle the account for every confessed sin, and then each sin is blotted out of the Judge’s book. One by one each confessed sin is deleted and removed from the sanctuary in heaven, and so the “cleansing of the sanctuary” is performed and a legal acquittal made for us.

When Jesus leaves the Most Holy Place, there is no longer anyone acting as our defending lawyer, pleading for the transgressors of the law. Those who have unconfessed sins still recorded in the books of heaven, when judgement is finished and Jesus’ work is complete, must now bear the punishment for their own sins.

The Old and the New Covenant.

(The Old and the New Testament)

Many view God as severe, relentless and demanding, while Christ is viewed as merciful, tolerant and loving. In many ways God the Father and Christ are often seen to contradict each other, not just by non-believers but also by believers. It is not possible to believe in Christ without also believing in God, therefore many Christians have placed their hearts in the New Testament while the Old is viewed as something out-dated and done away with. This understanding of God and Christ have created distorted understandings of the old and the new covenant.

God as the harsh Judge and Christ as the loving Redeemer makes them incomparable in many fundamental ways. It must be understood that if this is how we view the Divine Characters, then we have not only misunderstood one of Them, but both.

Christ explained that He and God the Father are one, in the same way that if the disciples continued in His footsteps, they would be one with Him. It is obviously not about a physical unity, but a unity in faith and teaching. God and His Son are one in character and intention. Not only that, but Christ claimed He had come to show man who the Father really was. Christ came to show God's personality, His ways, doctrines and His kingdom. Christ said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." (John 10:37) "Jesus answered... I must work the works of him that sent me" (John 9:4) "Many good works have I

shewed you from my Father...” (John 10:32).

The Saviour’s personality and His work were a reflection of the same God that many find so intolerant and severe in the Old Testament. To many this becomes confusing. So has God changed? The Bible says, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips” (Psalm 89:34).

The Bible gives us the impression that the covenant made with Israel in the Old Testament was an inferior covenant and that it was therefore necessary to make a new and improved one. Many think therefore that God has become friendlier and has adjusted Himself and made a new covenant reflecting this converted God. But was God really the One who required conversion? According to the Scripture references we just read, this cannot be the case. God is the same now as then. How then can we understand God and the covenants in the right way? And if God made errors in the first covenant, what were they? If God has not changed, Christ represented the very same personality and values that God had in the Old Testament. Nevertheless people continue to claim there is a different God in the the New Testament. So what has been misunderstood and what are we correct about?

There are some explanations in the Scriptures that can clear up the misunderstandings and place the two covenants in the correct light. Paul explains in Hebrew 8:6 that it was the promises that were inferior. Israel promised to keep the covenant, but broke their promise over and over again. The problem was that the people did not want to adjust their character to the covenant, and therefore broke the covenant and the laws God gave. Page after page in the history of Israel contains curses if the covenant is broken and blessings if it is observed.

But doesn’t this portray God as strict and uncompromising? Keep the covenant or die! - is often the message. Where is His endless mercy in this? Doesn’t this portray a dictatorship? Many non-believers dislike God as they regard the leading of His people as domineering and suppressive. It is for this very reason many consider Christ as an example of someone they like. He ate with the publicans and sinners while the God of the Old Testament judged and rejected them.

Many Christians who actively refute God’s law claim a love for Christ and feel that God has now modernised and turned away from His Old Testament doc-

trines, believing that Christ is God after His conversion. They think the message has changed from man needing salvation from breaking the law to God now converting and informing us through Christ that breaking His law is now acceptable. Such an understanding does not harmonise with Scripture or with Christ's own words. Even though the Bible speaks against such a misinterpretation of Christ's mission, the vast majority of Christians still have this understanding. Many are confused.

Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt 5:17) and He said of the Old Testament, "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He also said that if He did not correctly represent God as shown in Scripture, we should not believe in Him. John, one of the disciples of Christ, wrote, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:4-9).

According to this apostle, Christ had been faithful to God's commandments and He did not come to permit sin or the breaking of the law. Sin was of the devil and Christ had come to uplift God's law and condemn sin and lawbreaking. Any theology that approves the breaking of God's law was from the devil. It is strange that what John claimed is the devil's mission, many Christians today believe was Christ's mission. A mistake in people's assumption has resulted in confusing the devil's mission with Christ's. Realising this, should shake Christians, waking them up, whilst being thought-provoking to non-believers.

But the apostles were forewarned, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." (Gal 1:6) "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers

also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2.Cor. 11:14-15) And Peter wrote, "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness." (2 Peter 3:16-18).

There is a false gospel out there, a gospel constructed by the devil and his collaborators. With this in mind it is not surprising to see how people think that Christ's mission and the devil's mission have been merged together.

People have really become confused. They have learnt the gospel through teachers and other such interpreters, and when they themselves sit down to study Scripture, the book seems contradictory. They can read one phrase from Paul and think that it does not harmonise with what John and Peter wrote. If previously we have been told how to interpret a scripture, or if we have heard several sermons regarding a verse over and over again, it is difficult to see something other than what we have already been taught. Many cling to their false assumptions, and any verses that seem to contradict their false assumption, are put aside or viewed as "to hard to understand".

The Bible does not contradict itself. Christ and the God we meet in the Old Testament have not changed and are still one in thought and teaching.

It is time to clear up some of the prejudices many have towards God and His laws in the Old Testament. We need to understand if He was robbing man of his freedom as so many non-believers claim, and if He was a God in need of conversion as most Christians think.

At the Earth's beginning when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, the Lord Himself came walking among them. Others that met Him and talked to Him directly were Abraham, Jacob and Moses. Of Moses it is written that he spoke to Him face to face. The strange thing about this is that John writes, "No man hath seen God at any time." (1 John 4:12). Paul writes about God, "which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen" (1 Tim 6:16). So who was the Man who walked in the Garden of Eden, who was it that Abraham spoke to under the oak tree in Mamre, who was it that Jacob fought with an entire night

and who was it Moses spoke to face to face? John writes, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18). Christ did not only represent God when He was born into this world, but He represented God throughout the entire Old Testament. Christ was there speaking to Moses, face to face. Through Christ, God gave the children of Israel the laws, the ordinances and the messages of judgement that so many dislike God for; and thinking Christ opposed such concepts.

So did God and His Son change their opinion regarding how they should reach mankind and subsequently make a new plan of salvation? Was this idea a result of Their conversion? Peter writes that the plan of salvation was planned before the foundation of the earth, "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world..." and when Adam and Eve fell into sin they were told of this plan, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (1 Peter 1:19-20 & Eph 1:3-4; Genesis 3:15).

So what happened? Did They first make a plan, then make a new plan, and then end up returning to the original plan? It is so obvious yet many have misunderstood something very important. The Bible claims God does not change, yet some want us to believe that He altered His plan of salvation not once, but twice! God is not so unstable.

The very first covenant God made with man is the covenant before the fall of man. This is the true first covenant. After the fall of man God added a promise to this covenant, the promise of the blood of Christ. But there is another covenant which in the New Testament is called the "Old Covenant". This covenant was confirmed between God and the Israelites at Mount Sinai in Saudi Arabia. This covenant was confirmed with animal blood, which was a symbol of Christ's blood. This covenant therefore did not contain the promise added to the first covenant with Adam and Eve. The rituals performed at the confirmation of the covenant by Moses at Mount Sinai, contained symbols which pointed to the true covenant (with the added promise). But there were great differences between the covenant established at Mount Sinai and the one Christ was to confirm by adding His blood to it. The covenant established at Mount Sinai (which the New Testament refers to as the old covenant) is called a "failed covenant". While the covenant confirmed by Christ on the cross is called "the new covenant".

The exact misunderstanding is clear. The "old covenant" was just a representation, symbolic of the one true covenant. And the new covenant is that which was planned before the earth was founded, and the same covenant promised to Adam and Eve. There was never a second covenant that differed in its fundamentals. Paul says, "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. " (Gal 3:17). On Mount Sinai the Israelites received many different ceremonial laws which they ended up thinking was the actual covenant, when in fact they were merely symbols of the real and only covenant. Paul tries to explain that the ceremonial laws which were part of the covenant God made with them, were not to be instead of the promise of a Redeemer. The promise that Adam, and all the way to Abraham had received. There was no salvation through the animal sacrifices the Israelites made in the desert. They were only symbols.

Many Christians today claim that it was the law that was the problem with this covenant, and therefore Christ did away with the law when confirming the new covenant on the cross. But the problem was never the law. The problem was that the Israelites thought they could be saved by the symbols instead of what the symbols were pointing forward to.

When Christ died on the cross as a fulfilment of all these ceremonial laws, the symbols were no longer needed. So the ceremonial laws met their fufillment, but the moral laws and other laws not illustrating Christ's sacrifice, were never symbols and were never done away with. Among these were laws of health and morals.

The psalmist declares, "The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name." (Psalm 111:7-9) "The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes." (Psalm 19:8). How can something perfect be made better? What was wrong with the old covenant if the Lord wanted to make a new covenant?

God's moral law was never a problem. It is the sin (the breaking of this law)

that is the problem. Christ did not want to be misunderstood, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." (Luke 16:17). He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (Matt 5:17). How can the law be fulfilled? The law demanded the violators death, and by taking our sins on Himself, as a mediator, Christ fulfilled the demands of the law. It was not possible for Him to fulfil the demand of the law without simultaneously approving and confirming it. The act of dying on our behalf, was an acknowledgement by Christ that the law of God had the right to claim the death of it's transgressor, and therefore Christ acknowledged it's existence. The very opposite of what most Christians today believe that He did.

Our Lord fulfilled the law because it is a righteous law and because it's claim was just. As a mediator Christ made it possible for someone who who regrets their violation of the law (sin) to be forgiven and receive sufficient help to do the will of God. For, "the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD." (Isaiah 59:20).

Christ also came to fulfil the promise He had given through His prophets, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." (Jer 33:14-15).

When Christ said He had come to fulfil the law and the prophets, and that He Himself had kept God's commandments, He was in complete harmony with the teaching He gave on behalf of the Father, in the Old Testament.

God's problem with Israel as a people is described in Scripture, and reveals that the problem was them breaking God's commandments. The problem of the Old Testament was never described anywhere in the entire Bible as being Israel wanting to keep the law. Over and over again God calls for a conversion from sin and calls them to keep God's commandments, and over and over again they reject this and break them.

The fault in the Old Covenant was that Israel did not keep the law and that they only had animal offerings to atone for their transgressing of the law. This

animal-blood could not cleanse the people.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.” (Hosea 4:6-7)

“Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes... Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands; Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols. Nevertheless mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness. But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God. Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them... I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers’ idols.” (Ezekiel 20:12-24)

“For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law;” (Malachi 2:7-8).

The last prophet before Christ, was Malachi, who received the following message from the Lord, “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth

with a curse." (Malachi 4:4-6).

It is strange how so many have managed to arrive at the understanding that Christ's message in the New Testament is to do the exact opposite of what He did in the Old. In the Old, He rebuked those who rejected God's law, and in the New He supposedly rebukes those who keep God's law and His Sabbath! Can this really be so? And if Christ rebuked those who kept the law instead of those who broke it, did He then really represent the law and the prophets? What about the last message given to God's people before Christ's first coming? "insert part of quote from last". But now Jesus is to supposedly rebuke those who are obedient to this call? Would He then truly have been God's representative? "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not", Christ said (John 10:37). A recommendation many Jews today cling to when they are introduced to a gospel opposing the ways of the Lord they have been taught. The prophet Malachi says of God's messengers, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 2:7). If Christ changed or made void the law, He was not God's Messenger, nor was He God's High Priest as Paul describes in the Book of Hebrews. Many who have been taught the Old Testament, then subsequently introduced to the gospel from a zealous but deceived Christian, will naturally believe Christ to be a false christ.

The warning Christ's apostles gave regarding how Satan would counterfeit a new gospel and confuse people, can be clearly heard today. The prophecy has been fufilled - it really happened. When Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness he used Bible quotations to try to make Christ sin. Today many assume that when a priest preaches using Scripture, that he is God's spokesman. But there are no such guarantees. Satan cleverly misuses Scripture and has fabricated a false context for such quotations. Many Christian pastors and priests do the same today. The result is that people are presented with a distorted image of God, Christ and the plan of redemption. Essentially they misunderstand what kind of response God wants from them. Let us look at some of the myths many have been taught in their churches compared to what the word of God really says:

- Myth from preachers: The Pharisees were too busy keeping the law, and we need to guard ourself from doing the same.
- Christ said: Not at all, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness

shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt 5:20-21). Here Christ mentions many things from God's law and explains it needs to be kept more zealously than the religious leaders did.

- Myth from preachers: The law the Pharisees were so busy keeping, was God's law.
- Christ said: But Christ accused them and said, "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." (Mark 7:8)

- Myth from preachers: The Pharisees earned Christ's displeasure because they zealously kept God's law and ordinances.
- Christ said: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt 15:8-9). The Pharisees said, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Christ then answered and said to them, "But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matt 15:2-3). So, one of the reasons they earned Christ's displeasure was because they broke God's law in order to keep their own.

- Myth from preachers: The Pharisees were without love because they were so law-orientated.
- Christ said: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (John 14:21) and the disciple that Christ loved said, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:2-3).

- Myth from preachers: Christ disliked how thoroughly they kept God's law.
- Christ said: The opposite. This is what Christ rebuked them of, "Did not Moses

give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?" (John 7:19). The martyr Steven was in agreement when he said to the Pharisees that stoned him to death, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (Acts 7:53).

- Myth from preachers: The Pharisees were too "righteous".
- Christ said: "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matt 23:28). They were not righteous because they broke God's law. They only gave the people the impression they kept it, which is hypocrisy. "Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." (Matt 23:1-3)

- Myth from preachers: Everyone who is engaged in keeping God's laws and ordinances are in bondage and are similar to the Pharisees who Christ spoke out against.
- Christ said: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. " (James1:25). Christ promised, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John 15:10). There is no other conclusion to make from His words than if people want to cherish God's law and ordinances, they are blessed, not cursed. Christ promised us, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Heb 8:10) and "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt 12:34). If someone is engaged in speaking about and observing God's law, is it not because Christ has written the law in "their minds" and written it on "their hearts" so that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"?

- Myth from preachers: The Pharisees were too busy studying scriptures, so we must guard ourselves from becoming like them.
- Christ said: The problem of the Pharisees was that they failed to study the Scriptures diligently and correctly. They misunderstood the mission of the Messiah at His first coming, and thus they ended up rejecting Him. "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?" (Mark 12:24). Christ says here and in the Old Testament that delusion comes from

not knowing the Scripture, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). It is not difficult to understand what God is saying here, and that it is not knowledge that leads a man into error, but a lack of knowledge. In Daniel 9:26 it says, “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off”. In the Psalms and in Isaiah we can find confirmation regarding Christ’s mission at His first coming. Not only had they failed in their studies, but after Christ was resurrected from the dead he had to teach His disciples everything from the book of Moses, from the prophets of all that was written about Him in the Scriptures (Luke 24:27). Not only do we find Christ diligently teaching His disciples how to study Scripture, we can also find Paul saying, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim 3:15-17). In other words, the Pharisees were not too knowledgeable in Scripture and we must not follow in their footsteps. Their lack of true knowledge led them to reject Christ at His first coming, and the people who trusted in their wisdom rejected Christ also. In the same way we can fail to be ready for Christ’s second coming if we fail to understand His true will expressed in Scripture.

The Pharisaical interpretation of the law led them to violate it. It may seem innocent enough, to want to explain how the law was to be observed by creating several by-laws expanding on God’s law. But this action was in direct violation to God’s word. God had given the following command to the children of Israel, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.” (Deut 4:2). Yes, not only if they removed things from the law, but also if they added something to the law, the result is that the law becomes distorted and thereby broken.

Now that we understand how Christ defended God’s law and did not represent a reformed God in the New Testament, does that not make Christ harsh and relentless too? Many cannot entertain that image of Christ, but find it easier to have such an image of The Father. But Christ came to show us who God is. Not only who He was, but what His laws are. John says concerning Jesus, “the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14). Christ said, “I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.” (John 15:10). Christ came in human flesh to keep the

commandments of God that so many consider harsh, and a loss of liberty. When Christ kept the law, it was to help us see the law in a new light – the correct light. The law in practice stirred up abhorrence among those who clung to their own interpretation of the law, who had their own understanding on how the law was to be lived out. Many loved Christ and His character. They loved His kindness, His honesty and to many He was Someone it was impossible not to love. Many of the sinners Christ met during His life on earth were law-breakers and rebellious, but when they met Christ they loved His nature and character. They loved the law that He represented and which they had misunderstood, and they turned away from their rebellion.

Christ did not come to approve sin. He did not walk among the publicans and sinners because He approved of their sin, but because He wanted to help them turn away from their wicked ways. When someone asked Christ why He dined with such people He responded, "for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Matt 9:13). He had come to covert them. He also said, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." (Matt 9:12). Sin was described as an illness that we needed healing from. Christians who claim to love Jesus would today consider such a diagnosis of sin as judgemental, at the same time claiming that Christ was not judgemental. He defended God's law and had come to call people to repentance, not to approve of sin and embrace such attitudes.

Christ called the scribes and the Pharisees law-breakers which is by definition a sinner. He even referred to them as the devil's children because they did the works of the devil (John 8:38-47). Even so He did not walk with these sinners. Why? Because they did not want to convert, and therefore Christ had nothing to offer them. The sinners that Christ befriended were the sinners longing for His healing and who wanted a conversion. The very sinners who wanted to become more like the Man they so admired. A Man who was the law exemplified in flesh.

Many have come to understand new meaning behind God's law, by looking at the law as practised in the life of Jesus. Many who claimed the law represented a stern and unloving God, have now been given an understanding of something beautiful, of a law that creates love inside a human that will be expressed in their treatment of others. God's law recreates someone who you can trust and that you know will never willingly try to harm you.

What about all the laws God gave in the Old Testament? Do these laws lay witness to a severe and arbitrary God, or a loving God? Due to the many deceptions people have believed when seeing the God of the Old Testament, it is important to know if He was unreasonable or not. So why were such commandments given to man through Israel? Why were there penalties for violating them?

Firstly Israel was to become a nation with it's own country. Have you ever heard of a country without laws? Have you ever heard of a country without a court of law? Just as it is with all countries today, Israel instituted a court of law and a foundation to maintain order in their nation. If you stole you were punished, if you killed you were punished and so on. Without a court of law Israel would quickly become a haven for criminals from within, as well as from the surrounding nations. All the other countries had judges, laws and courts of law, but their laws were built on very different principles. God's system was built on a different foundation, of which the purpose was to give man peace. Many of the communities at the time of Israel would be thought of as savage today. Leaders and citizens alike sacrificed infants to the gods as apart of their culture. This, and other horrific immoralities were common among the neighbours of Israel, but in Israel this was forbidden. God called it abomination.

Israel had completely different and unique values in regards to sexual behaviour. To the surrounding countries sex between those of the same gender was not unusual. Adultery and sexual practices of all types were connected to pagan temples. Later when the Greeks grew in influence, the boundaries of sexual diversion became less. Zeus, the highest ranking god in Greek mythology, not only lusted after the opposite sex, but after young boys also. This did not begin with Greek mythology, but was a phenomena among the gods of many different nations. Many think that homosexuality, incest and pornography is a modern phenomena, but history tells us this is not the case. Even in ancient Egypt pornographic images were engraved on the walls. God's plan to have Israel present His law to mankind was not without reason, and God's ordinances would have been considered just as judgemental to peoples sinful lifestyles then as they are today.

God did not take over the planet and force His leadership upon the world. He chose a people to live in a society where they observed His laws and principles, so that others could see the harmony and safety this offered. The desired effect

was for the other nations to also want to practice God's law. God wanted to reach the world with His principles, not by force, but by the power of example. By this very method many people gained respect for God's law through the life of Jesus, as He was the perfect example. It was in this exact way God wanted to reach the world through Israel. This is why He led Israel out of Egypt and taught them His moral law. The law of God was not unknown to the children of Israel even though their time of captivity in idolatrous Egypt had adversely influenced them.

God's law was declared to the entire nation of Israel and they were asked if they wanted to be a part of His covenant and keep His law. If they wanted to enter into a special covenant with God He would raise them up as an especially elected people and bless them greatly. When the people heard the laws, the same laws they had been told about by their ancestors who also served God, they all answered with one voice, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do." (Exodus 19:8). God then confirmed their agreement through Moses. Moses wrote down God's laws that they had promised to keep, and recorded the peoples promise to keep it, and upon this book, blood and water were sprinkled as a symbol that they had entered into this covenant with God. Thereafter Moses went on top of the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments which were to be written with God's own finger. These commandments were written down by God Himself because they were to become an important part of Israelite worship.

The people were given the sanctuary-service where animals were to be sacrificed as a symbol of atonement for sin. This symbolised that God was willing to forgive the violation of His law if man repented and wished to turn from their sins; then God's arms were open. Once a year the high priest was to carry the blood into the Most Holy place in the sanctuary and sprinkle it over the Ark of the Covenant which contained the Ten Commandments. In this way, these commandments became even more exalted. The breaking of these commandments required the death of the sinner. Despite this seemingly harsh penalty, the sanctuary service showed that God would send them a Substitute and reform their characters if they repented. The blood of the victim was to be sprinkled above the commandments and represented Christ as the Substitute for the sinner. These animal sacrifices themselves did not do away with the sin that was committed, but represented the sacrifice of Christ in the future, which would actually atone for their sin, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Hebrews 10:4). Therefore the law-breakers of Israel

depended on God's covenant with mankind, the blood of Jesus, just as much as us, who live after Christ's death and resurrection. Israel was, so to speak, also under "the new covenant". However, since Israel failed their mission as the elected people, God was no longer bound to especially bless them as part of the agreement. After Christ's death, and His confirmation of the one true covenant with all mankind, the Israelites were now on par with the rest of the world. They either became a part of the new covenant through Christ's High Priestly work, or became a part of God's opponents. The Old Testament tells us of a God who enforces His laws, but also of a merciful God who forgave the broken-hearted transgressor.

In our modern society someone who breaks the law and does not wish to turn away from his works is rightly considered a threat to society. Therefore all countries of the world have prison systems and penal codes. These are made primarily to allow innocent people freedom from someone who inflicts criminal behaviour upon others. God's society also demanded a penalty for the protection of the people, and not because God was bloodthirsty (as so many have alleged!). It was not God who was threatened by the violators, it was the people. Therefore a law demanding a punishment was incorporated for the sake of the people. When Israel entered into a special covenant with God, those who did not approve of God's ways could have easily left the people and settled in the surrounding communities. But there too they would be subjected to a rule of law, perhaps even a corrupt one.

The land God gave them was already inhabited by pagans who regularly sacrificed their children. He had given them over 100 years to turn from their ways before He allowed the Israelites to conquer these areas. The surrounding nations not only saw that the observance of God's law was something beautiful, but also how God cared for those who were faithful to their Universal Leader.

However, Israel did not become the example God intended. As we mentioned earlier, God could have won the world by force. He is the Creator of the earth and the earth belongs to Him (Jer 27:4). But God would not choose this solution to regain a world in opposition. If His principles were not deep in their hearts then the earth would never become peaceful anyway. If man disagreed with Him and He forced them into obedience it would lead to captivity for man, and from there to rebellion. Trust in God had been destroyed through the lies and the deceptions of Satan. God could not command people to trust Him, He

had to win their trust back. Why did God want to win mankind's trust? Because He knew the results of their rebellion, and He wanted to save all that could be saved despite revolting against Him by refusing to obey Him as their Leader and Lawmaker. God expressed His wish in the following way, "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." (Ezekiel 18:32). God wanted to give everyone a new opportunity to choose, not only for the benefit of man, but because He Himself loved them more than a parent loves his child.

The only way for God to reach mankind without using force was to appeal to their hearts, showing them why He has to have laws. Therefore He needed Someone to represent Him to the world, Someone who could show how life could be if they allowed Him to be their King. Israel did not become the example He wanted to make of them. Instead of them representing Him to the world and bringing the peoples hearts back to Him, they became more like the surrounding nations. They broke their covenant with God, and broke all His commandments. They demanded to have a king to rule over them in the same manner as the heathen nations. God said to one of the leaders in Israel at that time, "And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." (1 Sam 8:7).

Even so, God did not reject them. He accepted their choice and tried to help them find a good king. In the beginning, Saul was faithful to God, and was at the time the only good choice for a king. Later, Saul turned away from the right path and God chose another young man who was more likely to fulfil God's will. David was anointed to be king. God tried to His utmost to lead His people in the right direction so they could prosper in life. Even when they opposed Him and asked for a human king, He met them where they were. The people continued to copy the behaviour of their neighbouring nations and ended up adopting their styles of worship and even their gods. They even went so far as to start sacrificing their children in these pagan religious rituals!

Within the social laws, God had given them laws regarding slaves and debt. It was never God's intention that thy were to have slaves, but the laws He gave were to make sure the children of Israel did not suppress the slaves they did have. His law told them to treat them kindly and that they should have the opportunity to regain their freedom after a certain amount of time. This was

strange to the surrounding countries. There a slave did not have rights and was usually treated animalisticly. The Israelites were commanded to treat them as human beings.

Often slaves found themselves in their predicament because of debt. God gave the Israelites laws that were to secure a victim of debt an opportunity to start afresh. Every seventh year the debt of the debtor was to be cancelled, and they were to receive a second chance (Deut 15:1). The poor and the widows were also to be cared for by their community. Such arrangements are not uncommon today as the western world have for centuries been influenced by the biblical structure. However in the days of Ancient Israel it was never a certainty that the poor would be taken care of.

The Israelites were supposed to worship without graven images. This was also very uncommon for the surrounding nations back then. The graven images told the story of the god and represented them, whilst the Israelites were forbidden to recognise religious images. Mankind could never learn to know God through images. They had to learn to know Him through His law and through His people who revealed it in their character. This is how they were to understand God and know Him. Were they to know and learn of God through images, they would be more susceptible to change and distort His character in their minds.

If they knew God through His laws and through the sanctuary service which illustrated His mercy, they were not so easily misled from the true understanding and there would be no room to misrepresent His character. If however, they totally lost sight of His law, they would also lose all understanding of who God is, and they would be unable to identify false teachings and avoid confusion. So when the people drifted away from God's law, pagan doctrines entered although they continued to claim they worshipped the true God. This is why God's reaction was so powerful towards the people. They adopted lies about Him and corrupted the knowledge of His character by amalgamating it with the characters of man-made gods. When an innocent man is misrepresented, we acknowledge his right to defend His character and have his name cleared and restored to accurately represent him. This he does for himself. How much more important then, that God defends His name against the false image people accuse Him of, whilst knowing that souls are lost forever because of it. God does this for our sake. So God was angry and sent prophet after prophet to help Israel turn from their false gods and reunite His true name with His true character that had been separated

in the minds of men.

Israel was to represent God's laws and show the world who He truly is, but instead they threw away His law and claimed to still represent Him. They added graven images, pagan gods and their rituals (like child molestation) to their worship. God abhorred it, and then these practises that He detests so much were being done in His name. God could not protect them any more. Those who were chosen to uplift His name had trampled it underfoot. The surrounding nations had no respect for the God of Israel and in many ways Israel became more degraded than her neighbours. Thus God allowed Israel to be conquered. After several pleas for them to convert, He allowed Babylon to destroy the temple that had been built in His honour along with the rest of Jerusalem. Recently the temple had been used for paganised worship of Him, and the symbols of the pagan gods decorated His holy things. Everything had been corrupted.

Despite this, some people had remained faithful towards Him and the Bible tells us of their despair. The prophet Daniel and his friends were taken captive to Babylon and stayed faithful to God's commandment refusing to partake in pagan worship. God secured their health, and later their lives by miracles, resulting in the amazement of all of Babylon at the power of their God. Through a few faithful men God used this opportunity to reveal who He was to a people and a nation who did not know Him. However this was nowhere near to what He could have done if Israel had remained faithful to the covenant He once made with them.

God tried over and over again to reach them, to help them convert so that He could once again bless them, but they would not respond. Israel no longer cared for their poor, they didn't care for one another and if you were in debt, you could be enslaved for the rest for your life. The women and children were not safe, rape was not uncommon and brutality continued to grow. God let them know of His displeasure and sometimes appeared furious. God punished, and God healed. He tried to save a little remnant of the children of Abraham whom He promised to help, but even they eventually rejected the Saviour, sent to atone for their sins.

All this was prophesied beforehand by, among others, the prophet Daniel (9th chapter). In the time of Jesus the Jews had corrected many of the mistakes and senselessness that had marked them in earlier times. After returning from cap-

tivity in Babylon and rebuilding the temple and the city, the people commenced upon a great reform. In many ways they became so afraid of falling into the same misfortune again that they discovered a new respect for God's law, making it very much a part of their lives. But more and more additional laws and regulations were added to God's commandments, supposedly to teach people how to keep it. The problem was that these regulations were man-made and not given by God.

The result was that God's law became distorted and unrecognisable in many areas. The law no longer reflected love, instead it resembled a tyrant. The mercy was gone from the law, and once again God's character was grossly misrepresented. The law no longer expressed God's love, but portrayed a God who demanded illogical and unreasonable demands upon people. One of the commandments whose meaning was totally destroyed was the Sabbath. This day, that had been so exalted, a day of heavenly blessings that was to be a seal (or bond) between God and man, now had so many regulations added to it, that it became a burden to all. Even mercy towards a fellow believer was considered work and therefore a violation. Therefore Christ said, "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

The entire law of God had been given for the sake of man. God did not create man in order to have servants living out His law, but the laws were given to serve and restore man.

The laws of health did not show God to be a tyrant, but showed a God who had their best interests at heart. He explained what animals were not fit for human consumption, such livestock, we now know as scientific fact, can contribute to disease and wear down the body. Pigs flesh has proven to be unhealthy. Shellfish has proven to contribute to high cholesterol, thus science continues to prove that the very things Israel were required to abstain from, are in fact harmful to the human body.

Many of God's regulations included how to handle different skin diseases when they occurred. Why? To prevent others from becoming contaminated. Specific rituals to purify the sick were the best possible treatments so they could heal and recover. Other regulations were given regarding fungus on clothing and in homes, something we now know to be very damaging to our health. Other laws were concerned with hygiene. Ancient Israel did not know what bacteria was,

but God did. Therefore many of the regulations were given with the combating of harmful bacteria in mind. Even during the time bacteria was discovered, several pioneers were ridiculed for believing that "invisible animals" could be transferred from one person to another. Doctor Semmelweis was among those who were ridiculed for believing in such things. Not until they discovered the microscope and the so-called "little animals" could be seen, was it taken seriously. It is only a few hundred years since the idea of bacteria was considered ridiculous, so it is easy to imagine how strange some of God's regulations seemed to the surrounding nations in the ancient Near East.

God gave a people, who had no science or technology, the possibility to make the right choices for healthy living. But God did not supply the scientific knowledge along with the advice, to investigate whether or not what He said was true. They had to believe Him and trust Him. There is still so much we do not know today and in some cases we are called to trust God and His commandments. Through the course of time He has shown that He far excelled above modern science and still knows more than we do today. Whatever science finds ridiculous today, the future generations may not find so ridiculous. This is just how it has been in the past.

God's Ten Commandments are a special law, and the penalty for breaking them is eternal death. The first four commandments God asks mankind to be loyal to Him, the following six concerns mercy and love towards our fellow man. God said, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." (Psalm 89:34). God never wanted to do away with this law. The laws in regards to health were as sure as the law of gravity. Breaking any of the health laws reduced the quality of life and brought on poor health. God's law still stands, and the effects of ignoring it still occur throughout the world.

So back to the new covenant. What is the difference? Was God wrong in the Old Testament? Did He do Israel an injustice? Has He changed His mind in regards to His own laws and regulations? Did He send Christ to show us a "new" and "improved" God, or to continue God's quest to show man who He is, and reveal His law though the example the Messiah? Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (Matt 5:17). Peter wrote, concerning Christ's mission, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter

2:21-22). John wrote, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” (1 John 2:4-6). The words of Christ and the apostles give meaning to who God and His law is through Jesus. Not only does it give meaning, but it shows how senseless it is to claim that Christ spoke against God’s law. It is not only unreasonable to assert such allegations, but as John writes, it is not Christ who is behind this but Satan. Satan in the guise of Christianity.

What is the difference between the old and the new covenant? Israel broke her covenant with God. She broke His laws and muddied His name before the heathen nations. Israel broke her promises, and Paul says, “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” (Heb 8:6). “And he [Moses] took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Exodus 24:7). Only days later, they danced around the golden calf breaking those commandments.

God’s plan had not changed. He still wanted to win man back to Him by touching his heart. Many of the children of Israel had sought to keep God’s law, not out of love for the message, but mechanically, like robots. The result was that they could not keep it and they fell. “Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.” (Romans 9:32).

Many people today claim they were “in bondage to the law”. But this expression has been greatly misunderstood, for they broke the law. How could they then become enslaved by it? By trying to keep a law they did not want to keep. They tried to observe laws they did not fully understand and did not love, and that would imprison you in bondage. We become slaves and bondsmen when forced to do something other than what we want to do. This is the key to so many difficult passages in Scripture. Did they manage to observe the law? No, they attempted to, but only because they felt forced to do so, and they did not mange to stay on the path. It is a natural consequence. If you are in a slavish relationship, sooner or later it will come crashing down. Everything in our natural bodies will oppose it. All attempts to be happy in such a situation will fail. God has created us this way, as men and women of liberty. If we become suppressed

or enslaved by something, then we become miserable.

By understanding what went wrong with the old covenant, we understand how and why it resulted in suppressing the people, resulting in the "violation of the law", and we understand why God speaks of a new covenant with better promises. This is the part so many misunderstand. They think the new covenant removes what they feel the problem is; the law, for if the law is removed they think they wont have to be in bondage to the law. But this is not God's solution. The law is there for a reason. There was nothing wrong with the law, only man's attitude towards it. It was their attitude that turned the law into a slave master. Therefore God says, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer 31:31-33; Heb 8).

God's solution is to start with man's heart. Wasn't this where the entire problem lay; in their hearts? God's law was not to them a pleasure, something they loved and kept because their hearts agreed with it. The law was not a part of their nature, a part of them. The law had become something external, as if to try to control them. If something is in our hearts, it belongs to us. If it is just an external slave driver, it turns us into unhappy slaves. God's goal was therefore to write the law in their hearts. The solution was that it had to become something they wanted themselves, something they glowed for, a natural desire to do the right thing. So that it would feel like captivity if someone asked them to break it, because they could not break it without their hearts also being broken and their identity lost.

What is freedom? Isn't freedom the ability to do that which the heart desires? It's partly true, but freedom is a lot more than that. People often think freedom lies in freedom to act, but freedom is also connected to consequences. Freedom is to be able to make a choice from the heart and at the same time knowing that the consequence is freedom.

To simplify it, here is a few examples:

A good formula:
Doing your heart's desire + act + good consequence = happiness and freedom

What is so often neglected:
Doing your heart's desire + act + bad consequence = depression, negative emotions, loss of quality of life. (Not freedom in the long run)

The formula for the apostate Israelites:
Going against the heart's desire + act + bad consequence = depression, feeling of suppression which again will lead to revolt.

The first formula is certainly the most desirable. We so often forget that the consequences of our actions must also be a part of the lesson. This is why the earth, (both nature and mankind), has been so desperately destroyed in front of our very eyes. We have forgotten preventative measures. We live for the present and do little to consider the future.

Firstly God gave us laws for our own sake. Primarily so that we could avoid adverse consequences to our own life and so that our actions would not create negative consequences for others. One man's idea of freedom could be to take away that of another's. This is the common principle in cases of violence, theft, slander and many, many more crimes. The commandments God has given secure freedom for all. God's commandments are there to help us, not to rule over us.

God sees the entire formula, while we close our eyes to it. We want to do what our hearts desire, when we desire it. Such thoughts gradually destroy all life on this planet. God sees the whole formula and is unhappy for us. That is why He asks us if He may help us. He could have left this ungrateful planet that revolted against Him and waited for us to wipe ourselves out. But He didn't. When Adam and Eve sinned He didn't angrily abandon them to misery. Because of their sin they felt naked. It was their sin, even so God tried to console them. It says, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them." (Gen 3:21). God grieved on their behalf. Furthermore, because mankind, His creation, His children, slowly turned their backs on Him, God clothed them and covered them so that they would not feel naked. He did so to help them. Adam had said when He was in the garden hiding from God, "I

heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Gen 3:10). When the Lord made clothing for them, it was also so they would not feel the need to hide from Him.

This is what the new covenant is all about. God wants to remove our filthy clothing (our sins) and clothe man in Christ's righteousness so that man no longer has to be separated from Him.

So many people have a distorted view of God and His law. They interpret it as if He demands things that will make us unhappy. But it is in fact the other way around. He asks us to listen to Him so that we have a formula that will be good, a formula that will maintain good conscience and have a happy ending. Man has created formulas where the heart desires that which leads to grief, misery and death. Where is the freedom in death? He tells us through Scripture, Fear not, I will create a new heart within you. I will help you want to do that which gives you a happy ending. The entire new covenant is about this, God's solution. Not to give His law to whip you and control you from the outside, but to write the law in the heart of he who prays for it. Thus they can find joy, peace and happiness by keeping the law, which then becomes their own rule of life. If anyone tries to force them to break these laws written on their hearts, it would feel like suppression being forced upon them, and they will not want to.

God did not want to enter into an covenant with man based on half-hearted promises from fickle men. He says (and Paul quotes), "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb 8:8-10).

How was man to be saved according to the new covenant, the one true covenant planned before the earth was founded? A teacher in Israel named Nicodemus came to hear what Christ thought of salvation. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see

the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:3-7). Man had to convert, the very same message given throughout the Bible. We have to be born again and Christ said we also had to be born by the Spirit. What does this mean? And why do we have to be born by the Spirit? Paul explains why a man must be born of the Spirit to be saved. This is the birth connected with the new covenant, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his... Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:7-14). Paul says that we cannot continue living by the flesh.

Just as Christ said the new covenant is to be born of the Spirit and to then live by the Spirit. The words of Christ and Paul harmonise with what Christ told the prophet Ezekiel was His plan. Christ and God in the Old Testament, and Christ and God in the New, are unchanged. This is what He said to Ezekiel, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them... I will also save you from all your uncleannesses" (Ezekiel 36:26-29).

God's way is unchangeable and His intention and goal remain unchanged. Christ did not seek to change this, but rather to confirm God's word. God would continue to reach people by knocking on their hearts and minds, and not by force. To His own church He said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev 3:20). The new covenant was not to be built on man's inferior promises, but on God's promises. When Christ died on the cross, death was not removed from the sinner, but a door had been opened so that whoever wished to convert back to God could be released from the conse-

quences of sin, which is death. By Christ's death, by Him taking upon man's penalty, anyone who wanted to could go free. If the whole world wanted to, Christ's blood would be enough for them all. But not all want it, and thus there is mention of perdition.

When God says "repent or lose your life", many people are of the opinion that God is unjust and arbitrary. "God created me and put me in this world, just to give me this message" they think. In many ways it may sound like an evil dictatorship. Although the evil one has worked hard to make the righteous seem unjust, he continues to work day and night to make the logical seem illogical. When people think about God, they lose all of their sense of logic which they usually apply to their daily life. God created humans, that's correct. He loved them, and He asked for obedience.

When a couple decides to have a child, by coming together they create a third life, and when the child is born they love it more than anything else. Their home now becomes the child's house. Maybe they will have another child and share everything they have with their children. They raise them and teach them to decide right from wrong as God did with His creation. Even though the mother gave birth to the child and shared everything she has, it is not allowed to do whatever it wishes in the house. This is a perfectly logical concept for everyone. As the child grows and develops it's own personality and character, there will be more and more rules in the house. If the child comes home late, there will new rules to limit how long it will be allowed to stay out. Many children will feel that this is a loss to their liberty, and they rebel. But have the parents done their children injustice by, for example, asking them not to throw a party whilst being home alone, or prohibiting sexual immorality in their bedroom, or not permitting them to hit and pester their siblings? Can't they be allowed to do whatever they want? Their parents brought them into this life, they didn't ask to be born!

Who would think for a second that the rules given to children are put there to suppress them? Who would accuse the parents of giving birth to their children just to have slaves? The rules are there to bring peace and happiness to the house. In a happy home, the rules are there because of the parents love for their children and for their own good, because the children do not always know what is good for them. Other rules, as the children grow older, are there to protect other members of the family too. Love towards the child is to teach him or her to respect and love others. They learn to share and they are told to apologise when

they have hurt their siblings. Are their parents dictatorial when they ask their child to tidy up after themselves? Of course not.

God says, “The Earth is Mine”, and He created man “in His image” to love and share everything with them. The Earth was to be their home. In the beginning, only two commandments where apparant, God sanctified the Sabbath (a day when He was going to spend time with His creation), and He commanded them to stay away from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Then the rebellion came. The children of God did not only rebel against God, but also against one another.

Presenting a new commandment saying, “Thou shalt not kill” would be a very strange thing to do on an earth where nobody has ever killed someone. Then Cain killed his brother Abel, then there was sexual immorality, lies, deceit, unfriendliness, stealing and so on. God’s law, written on tables of stone, were “a shadow of heavenly things” (Heb 8:5). God let man know what His Law was. It was not a new law, it was a law built upon the eternal principles of God that were not intitially apparant. Breaking these had never come up in anyone’s heart before, and therefore there was no need to present it to them. The best thing would be if man kept the law by their natural heart and not by the letter. That is why, in the new covenant, God wanted to “write His law in our hearts and minds”. If all of humanity would accept this, there would not be a need for a written law any more. Paul writes, “Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” (1 Timothy 1:9-11). Furthermore, he writes, “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Romans 2:13-15).

Understandably, the dilemma God faces with humanity cannot be compared to a normal family’s. Nevertheless, how would you react if you had two sons and

one of them started victimising the other? Of course you love the guilty son as well as the victimised son, so would it be just to permit him to continue harassing his brother? Would you not demand that he repent? If you let him continue his violence against his brother, would you not be unfair to the victim? How could it ever be fair to let it continue without intervention?

What about our own judicial authority? Is a judge merciful if he lets a rapist return to his home and his children? Or if he were to release murderers? A judge's responsibility is not to be dictatorial or vindictive, but to protect and preserve his fellow human beings. What a relief for the neighbours of the violent criminal. God is not vindictive, that is not why His law is given for all eternity, and not why He punishes those who refuse to repent.

Many people have made up their mind, that God is unfair when He judges, especially when it is themselves who are guilty. Simultaneously however, they claim that He is not just when He does not intervene, when they have been wronged. Yet this reveals more about the nature of man than God. They want God to act when they are victims of injustice, but not when they themselves inflict injustice on others. God is regarded as evil if He does not punish the unjust and solve their problems, but is also regarded as evil if He interferes in their own life, and appeals to them to repent. This is totally illogical, and equally unfair - what do they want Him to do?

Peace on earth is what everybody wants and God has provided the formula for this. Countries have volumes of law books so vast that they cannot be carried. While man has understood these laws quite intimately, they think God is unreasonable in His demands when He writes ten simple commandments on two tablets of stone. John writes, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). Put one, A4 sized sheet of paper side by side with the state law-book of Norway, and you will feel quite unreasonable accusing God of being exacting. By these commandments, God can provide peace in the world, but humanity does not want it.

Earth belongs to God and He did not create it so humans can behave as they do today. The earth would not survive for long without His intervention. The Creator's work is being torn down every day and natural disasters are threatening the earth every day. God does not want to create a New Earth for those who

will not take care of it, or each other. He shall "destroy them which destroy the earth" (Rev 11:18). For all those out there suffering, He will punish evildoers and put an end to evil forever.

Humans are not immortal, only God has immortality, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." (1 Timothy 6:16). He would like to give humankind a chance to live for eternity. He wants to create a new earth and start anew, but God has not forgotten the inhabitants on earth that have rebelled against each other and against Him. He does not want to create the New Earth with new creatures, He still loves the ones He has already created, but who rebelled against Him. He wants to give them a new earth and eternal life too, but how can God be just if He allows everyone access to it? Sin would continue in the new earth as it did the first one, but this time for all eternity.

Then there is the message of judgement. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The question is not if you have sinned, but if you want to continue your rebellion against God and His commandments. It is all over the question of if you want God's law in your heart and in your mind on the new earth. If you do not want "The kingdom of God" (Luke 17:20-24) by being born again, then Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... [and] cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3,5).

Why? Because God wants to give His children a safe life. He won't let them suffer any more. He has made a choice; that sin has to be eradicated. Thus, those who love sin, and do not repent, will lose their opportunity to have eternal life bestowed upon them. God cannot keep them imprisoned and alive for all eternity.

Humans live approximately 70-100 years, and many are in opposition their entire life. The devil and his angels have lived for thousands of years, and they have been orchestrating their rebellion all this time. If God gave people that cling to sin unlimited time, it would still not convert them, but time would make their rebellion even worse. Satan and his angels, and even pre-flood man who lived for hundreds of years, are all examples of this.

No man has had immortality, Adam and Eve was not immortal either, but were allowed to eat from the tree of life that gave them life. After they sinned they lost the right to eat thereof, and as a consequence this led to death. The death penalty upon mankind is because all have sinned and posed a threat against a peaceful society. The plan of salvation was to give every human being a second chance. He who they rebelled against would make the greatest sacrifice. He would give His Son, so that He could suffer the punishment instead of man. This opened the gates of heaven so that everyone that acknowledged their sin and repented would be forgiven and saved.

God judges people out of love, He forgives them out of love and does everything He can to reach man's heart. But humans have to be born again, they need to receive a new heart and a new spirit so that they wont continue the rebellion. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezekiel 36:25). "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer 31:31-33).

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb 8:10).

People need to let Jesus in and let Him do this in their hearts, they need to receive the Spirit of God and let Him lead them back to the image that God originally created them in.

The Father and Jesus are the same today and yesterday. Perhaps Christians would not be Christians if they understood that Jesus did not come to permit sinners to keep on sinning, but to convert them. Perhaps this would feel like a reproach to them, not wanting to repent from their sins, if they want to keep sin in their lives. But to keep the Christian title, and convert God into someone He

is not, would not only be fooling themselves, but also to misrepresent God to others.

Is God just, or was He unjust when He judged those who killed their children in heathen rituals, who murdered, stole and raped in The Old Testament? Was He unfair when He cried for repentance, or when He said that sinners would not inherit the kingdom of heaven? Was He unfair when He offered every sinner a chance to regret and repent of their sins? Is He unjust when He begs us to turn away from those things that destroy both us and people around us? Is He unfair when He wants us to regard Him as the only God, and give our loyalty to Him, when He in fact is the only God? Is He unreasonable when He says that one cannot serve two masters? (Matthew 6:24). How can there be peace if everyone serves their own god, following each god's different precepts? If everyone regarded the God who created the heavens, the earth, and all mankind, then everyone would have to live according to the same precepts. God does not demand us to regard Him as the highest because He is thirsting for power, but because it is in everyone's best interest.

Can we choose our parents? God is mankind's Father as well as the Creator of everything on earth. We need to act according to this fact. If we put someone else in His place, we are doing Him wrong. Where can one find a more forgiving, just, merciful or patient Father than God? He does not force anyone to follow Him and He would not force anybody to keep His commandments. We can choose for ourselves what we want to do. Like the thief decides that he wants to steal, his choice will have consequences. God also gives violators of the law the freedom to choose, but for every choice there is a consequence. Such is a natural way of dealing with any situation, if He is to be fair to the victim.

God's covenant with man is eternal and cannot be altered. It is forgiving and merciful, but it is in total contrast to sin, not an excuse to sin. Now we are all faced with a choice - what do you want? Do you wish to receive the gift that God wants to give you; a new heart, forgiveness and a new life? Or do you love this world's sin and want to keep on being a part of the kingdom of sin? Will you receive the covenant of God that He offers, or do you not want His righteousness?

God does not threaten with punishment if one does not want to follow Him. He proclaims the inevitable consequences of the path that they choose. God

cannot create an earth with peace if everyone serves their own god with their own separate values, that will always lead to disagreement and war, differences and envy. That is why God has the first four commandments which tells man to regard Him as the only true God. The last six commandments are to create peace among people in their daily lives. Is this unreasonable, or is He just? Is the earth ours, and God an intruder, or is the earth His? “I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me” (Jer 27:5).

Can He leave earth when thousands of people cry to Him every day to intervene? Should He not interfere? He has done this – and will also do this in the near future. He promised sin shall be destroyed. There will be a judgement and there will be salvation. The wonderful thing is that He has not prejudged who will be saved and who will not. He has, through His Son’s blood, given every human being the opportunity to choose for themselves. He will not leave those who love Him even if they have trespassed against Him. By the death of Jesus, they have received life.

There is a lot we do not understand about God. Sometimes it is as easy as just asking Him, and He will not leave us wanting. Some things we cannot understand, because we do not see the whole picture, and do not know everything we need to know in order to understand. God claims He is just. What is just about letting His Son die to let us live? God is more than just, He is infinitely merciful. Many stories in The Old Testament do not portray a harsh God as much as they do a benevolent God. He did not approve of everything Israel did, or even everything His faithful servants did, but He had to reach them where they were, in an attempt to woo them to Him. When the Israelites wanted a king, God could have left them. After all, the land was no longer constructed according to the plan that He intended. But if He had done that, He would not have been able to reach any one. That is why He meets people at their level, He instructs them and asks that they repent. He seeks after their hearts. The many wives of Solomon does not reveal a God who allows polygamy, it shows a God who was close to His people and sought to influence man where ever and however He could. This is how God met the people who lived in the times of The Old Testament, and is still the way God meets people today.

The fact that God can help someone that does not perfectly represent His rights

and His values, does not show that everything this person does is unacceptable to God. No, God meets us where we are, and seeks to attract us to Him. He waits patiently and does not stop until we close the door entirely to Him. God meets homosexuals, criminals, gossipers, and prejudiced people alike. He meets the rebel, and indeed anyone where they are. He seeks to reach their hearts, and says, "Come, follow me". If they want to, they will follow Him. If they do not want to, that still does not mean that they were never led by God, or never had an experience with Him. It only means that they did not follow Him any longer. Some feel that since God met them where they were, He was satisfied with them in spite of the life they led. But Jesus did not associate with sinners because He had accepted their lives as they were, but because He loves them and wanted to convert them and bring them back to Him. He spent time with them and talked with them to reach their hearts. That is the exact thing He is still doing today.

With Him, He has a gift called "The New Covenant". Inside there is forgiveness for all sins by the blood of Christ. And in that same package is His Spirit and a new birth. The gift cannot be divided into separate pieces. With this gift He is standing and knocking on every humans heart to save as many as possible. Why? Because He loves them and does not want them to die.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev 3:19-22).

The Old Covenant	The New Covenant
Contents:	Contents:
The Law	**The Law**
Promise:	Promise:
"All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. " (the people)	**"I will put my laws ... in their hearts" (The LORD)**
Mediator:	Mediator:
Moses	**Jesus Christ**
Blood:	Blood:
Blood from animals	**The blood of Jesus Christ**

ISHMAEL AND ISAAC

Many have been confused over the allegory Paul used to illustrate the Old and New Covenants. Here is the way he wrote about it: "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." (Gal 4:22-25).

Paul portrays Isaac and Ishmael, the two sons of Abraham, as representing the Old and New Covenants. He plainly shows that Hagar's son, Ishmael, symbolizes the Old Covenant, and Sarah's son, Isaac, is a type of the New Covenant. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise... So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (Verses 28-31).

This is interesting. How do the sons of those two women represent the two covenants? Actually, they are a perfect illustration according to everything we have learned so far. God had promised Abraham a son by his wife Sarah, but because she was almost 90 years old, neither of them believed such a thing could happen. Sarah knew that her womb was dead and that she was long past the age for bearing children. So she suggested that her husband take Hagar, her handmaid, and have a child by her. It seemed the only way to *rescue* God from an impossible promise. In time, Abraham yielded to the face-saving device and had a child by

Hagar.

Here is an exact illustration of the Old Covenant principle of "we will do". Abraham tried to work it out in the flesh, according to human effort and planning. The old arrangement failed just as surely as the Old Covenant promises failed, because there was no dependence on divine power. God did not ever recognise Ishmael as the promised seed.

When Isaac was born, it was a miracle. God actually created a new life out of a biologically barren womb. The physical impossibilities yielded to the supernatural, creative power of God. Isaac perfectly represents the principle of the New Covenant relationship based upon regeneration, a new-birth experience, which begets the life of the Son of God in all who believe. The natural, physical womb of Sarah was totally incapable of producing any fruit. In the same way, the natural, carnal body and mind of a sinner cannot bring forth the fruit of obedience. When God used His power to create a new life within Sarah, the impossible happened, and she bore a son. When God uses His power to create new life in the soul, the impossible happens again - a human being becomes spiritual and obedient.

Isaac was not "born after the flesh" but "after the Spirit" (Galatians 4:29). Because man is carnal and "weak in the flesh," he has no power to attain to the righteousness of the law. He, too, must be born after the Spirit. Every attempt to obey on the Old Covenant basis of human effort will produce only children of bondage. The law must be written into the heart by the Holy Spirit and fulfilled by "Christ in you."

This allegory of Hagar and Sarah clears up another very important point of truth. Those who are under the Old Covenant are the commandment breakers, and those under the New Covenant are the commandment keepers. It was only when Abraham disobeyed God by taking Hagar that he fulfilled the principle of the Old Covenant. When he trusted God to give him a son through Sarah, he was being obedient to God's will, and properly represents the New Covenant Christians. Yet how often do modern interpreters get these facts confused! Like the three young preachers, they accuse law-keepers of being under the Old Covenant. The truth is exactly the opposite. The law is not really kept until it is written on the heart of the transformed believer. Then it becomes the mark of identification - the love symbol - for those who are born of the Spirit. Jesus said,

“If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). John wrote, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (1 John 5:3).

(“Ishmael and Isaac” is from “Why the Old Covenant Failed” by Joe Crews, p25-29. Published by Amazing Facts, 1980.)

HOW WERE THE COVENANTS CONFIRMED?

Since Jesus came to confirm a New Covenant, it is important to understand how this Covenant was confirmed, and the Bible does not leave us ignorant as to how a covenant is confirmed. The "Old Covenant" which was confirmed between the LORD and the Israelites at Mount Sinai, reveals what had to be done for the covenant to be counted as valid. Moses had to follow "I AM's" instructions closely. Later, the same method was observed whenever entering into other kinds of covenant. This biblical method of confirming an agreement, or a covenant, is now the basis for traditional, modern methods of confirming agreements.

Not only was Jesus to confirm a New Covenant on the cross, but He was also going to buy us our freedom, "Ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 7:23).

At one point in history, Jeremiah was told by God to buy up land. Jeremiah wrote, "And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances. So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open: And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all

the Jews that sat in the court of the prison. And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days." (Jeremiah 32:10-14).

The main points in making the purchase, or agreement valid were:
1) First the agreement is proposed.
2) Then the agreement is written down.
3) Then the written agreement is signed and sealed.
4) And then, when the agreement is valid, it is carried out.

How is a covenant confirmed?
When Nehemiah and the people renewed a covenant with God, it is written, "And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it" (Nehemiah 9:38).

What happened at the confirmation of the Old Covenant at Mount Sinai was, "…Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words." "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you" (Exodus 24:3-8 & Hebrews 9:19).

The main points in the confirmation of this covenant are:
1) First the agreement is proposed.

2) Then the agreement is written down.
3) Then the written agreement is sealed with blood (and water).
4) And then, when the agreement is valid, it is carried out.

We are told that Jesus came to "buy us" back, and confirm a New Covenant. So, did He follow the same biblical method when confirming the New Covenant? The very same method that He Himself told Moses and Jeremiah to do? Jesus said Himself that He had come to fulfil the law and the prophets.

If He did so He must have done following:
1) Propose the agreement.
2) Write down the agreement.
3) Seal the written agreement with blood (and water).
4) Then, the New Covenant was validated, and He must carry it out.

Did Jesus do this? Let us see…
1) Propose the agreement: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people… for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34).
2) Write down the agreement: "And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments" (Exodus 34:28).
3) Seal the written agreement with blood (and water): "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already… one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." (John 19:33-34) "and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent…" (Matthew 27:51).
4) Then, when the written covenant was valid, He carried it out: "For a testament is of force after men are dead…" (Hebrews 9:17).

Since Jesus had said what the covenant was, "My law" and to "forgive" (Jeremiah 31:33 & 34), and we know that this is the only covenant He wrote down, and that this covenant had to be sealed with blood and water, it is not difficult to understand where the blood of Christ had to flow down to, after the "earth did

quake, and the rocks rent" under the cross. The Ark of the Covenant with the Tables of the Law had to be it's final resting place, and the Mercy Seat (the place of atonement which by receiving the blood of Jesus can offer forgiveness from breaking the law) had to be the place where Christ's blood was sprinkled to seal the covenant. Thus, when the rocks were rent apart, they opened the way for Jesus' blood to reach where the Ark was hidden. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17). If Jesus came to fulfil the law and the prophets, He also had to fulfil this requirement, and that He has done.

Paul leaves no doubt that the mission of Jesus on the cross was to be exactly like the ceremony performed by Moses. He identifies the antitype for us. "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions… For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water… and sprinkled both the book (the book of the covenant), and all the people..." (Hebrews 9:15-19).

"…to be testified in due time."

So what was the purpose of confirming the covenant in this way? For the same reason that we make contracts and confirm them today. If a person buys a house, why is a mere verbal agreement not enough? A verbal agreemet is not even enough if we move into the house straight away, because later anyone can come and claim that the house is in fact theirs, or perhaps that you only own one of the floors. They may even claim that a completely different agreement was reached regarding the house. Much can happen in different types of purchases, or in different kinds of agreements. If you had to stand trial because someone said that the house you bought is not yours, or that a different agreement was made, you can forget about trying to win that case if you do not have a signed contract that proves what agreement was actually made. Therefore we make written contracts, and sign, or seal them. They give us the ability to show what the agreement was, and when or if it is currently in force.

This was also God's purpose. When God told Jeremiah to buy the land, he was

told to do following, “Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed… and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.” (Jeremiah 32:14).

Today, there is total confusion in the Christian world. Several hundred different Christian denominations have arisen, and the reason behind it is just one; there are different opinions as to which covenant Jesus confirmed at the cross, and what that covenant involves.

In times past, God knew how to hide the “contract” in a safe place, in order to have it available to produce in case of confusion. When the first covenant was confirmed, God’s part of the covenant and the Israelite’s promises were both written down in a book. This book was sealed with blood and water, and it became a sealed “contract”. This covenant was invalidated when one of the parties broke their side of the agreement, but many years later, the people renewed the covenant with God. The Israelites experienced a great apostasy, partly because they misunderstood the covenant they had made with God. They began to mingle sun worship with the worship of God, and thus they again broke the covenant they made with God. Although mistaken, many believed that they had the right understanding of the truth. Such theological chaos became part of daily life for the Israelite’s, when King Josiah was on the throne. In cases like this there was only one thing that could be done in order to show the confused people what really was true, and what was the actual covenant that had been confirmed.

The book of the covenant had been missing for a long time, but now it had been found. It was found while certain rooms around the Temple were being cleaned out, “And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD… And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes… saying, Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.” King Josiah asks God humbly for forgiveness, and God accepts his prayer. “And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book

of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of THIS COVENANT THAT WERE WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK. And all the people stood to the covenant." (2 Kings 22:8-23:3).

God knew to hide "the contract" documenting the agreement, or the covenant that was made in both Jeremiah's time, as well as in the time of the Israelites. Today, no one can deny, that all of Christianity is divided because it is confused as to what the covenant involved when it was entered into at the cross. What is the actual contents of Christ's testament? Has God changed, or does He use the same methods today, as He did with His people in ancient times? Has God hidden "the contract" and "the evidence" of history's most important covenant ever?

The "sealed covenant" from Christ was once hidden away, and will now be shown to the world, in the same way as Jeremiah's contract, and the Israelites' Book of the Covenant were. The Book of the Covenant was discovered at the relevant time, when it was needed as evidence as to what God requires of the people. In the same way, evidence of what happened on the cross, is according to Paul, to be produced to the world at the relevant time, "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Timothy 2:6). "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood… for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son" (1 John 5:8-9).

The covenant cannot be invalidated

We see that the confirmation of the New Covenant happened on the cross. By accepting the law's requirements and therefore the law itself, Jesus had to die if He was to save us from the curse. "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto" (Galatians 3:15). Therefore nothing in the covenant can be changed after it was confirmed on the cross; not the law, nor the promise, nor the Mediator or the blood. The seventh day Sabbath (from sunset Friday to sunset on Saturday) is one of the Ten Commandments, and was also confirmed on the cross, so nor could it be changed to another day. If there was a new or different law brought into effect, then Jesus would have had to die again to confirm it and

to die for our violation of this new law. But He has not done that and He is not going to do that. Just as the Mediator in the New Covenant cannot be changed once the covenant was confirmed by the blood of Christ. Thus popes, priests, or religious leaders alike cannot take Jesus' place as Mediator between God and man.

It is the same with us today. As long as a covenant, or an agreement is not signed, the contents can be changed. A will is a covenant agreeing how the dead persons finances should be distributed. No-one can change a persons will after it has been signed, and the person has died. That would be a crime against the deceased. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Hebrews 9:16-17). God could have changed the covenant or His testament/will if He wanted to before He confirmed it, but prior to it's confirmation He said, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." (Psalm 89:34). "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." (Romans 3:31).

More things fulfilled…
The confirmation of the Old Covenant also contained several details which Jesus fulfilled.

- "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD". In addition to telling them the law at Sinai, Jesus preached God's law in His work here on earth in over approximately three and a half years. He said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." (John 7:16). He taught God's commandments, both in word and in act, "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John 15:10).
- "… and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do…" Paul let us know that these promises were not good enough. In the New Covenant it was Jesus that was going to give the promises. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10).
- "… and (Moses) rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill…". The Mercy Seat was an altar to receive blood. God saw to it that the Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat was hidden in a cave under the mountain Jesus was going to be crucified in.

- "… and twelve pillars…". "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3:14). The disciples were going to be "pillars" in remembering the crucifixion and death of Jesus, by bringing it to the world. "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (Revelation 21:14).
- "…he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book…" For more on this, see earlier in this chapter, and the following chapter, "Scarlet wool and hyssop"
- "Saying (Moses), This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you…" "And he (Jesus) took the cup… saying… For this is my blood of the new testament…" (Matthew 26:27-28).

The testament

So far we have covered many parts of the death of Jesus and the blood on the Mercy Seat. Some of the points:

1) The law had to *witness* that the violations of the law were paid for. In this way the demands of the law were fulfilled.
2) The blood and water of Jesus on the Mercy Seat was also a fulfilment of the confirmation of the New Covenant.
3) The blood and water of Jesus on the Mercy Seat *sealed* God's *contract* which is shown in times of confusion.

Another essential point should here be mentioned.

4) The blood of Jesus on the Mercy Seat carried into effect Jesus' testament. A testament does not come into force before the death of He who made it. The blood that was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat therefore makes the testament valid. Jesus could not offer mankind forgiveness and eternal life before the law's requirements were paid. The testament of Jesus, granting us life by His death, could not be carried into effect before His death. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead…" (Hebrews 9:16-17). "Therefore", Paul explains, "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood" (Hebrews 9:18).

This is an important part of the study. The New Covenant was going to be sealed

with blood for more than one reason. In order for Jesus to be able to fulfil every part of the covenant all in one single act (giving His life on the cross), enormous planning was required. Paul compares the shedding of Jesus' blood to a deceased person's will for one simple, but extremely important reason. The New Covenant was to be a gift from God. The promise of a Saviour, the promise that He would write the law in our hearts and give us victory over sin. The New Covenant was a free offer to mankind. It was not a covenant that required anything from the other party (mankind) except to simply freely receive the gift. A will is written down, and by the person's death it is carried into effect, and what is left in the will is then freely given to the beneficiary. They cannot buy it, they receive it freely by the person's death. But they can choose not to receive the gift that is offered. People today also have this option. Jesus has left His testament, or will. It is a testament that offers us eternal life by His death. The blood was shed and the testament is now valid. Now, the only factor remaining is for us to choose to either receive the gift (Jesus' offer) or refuse it.

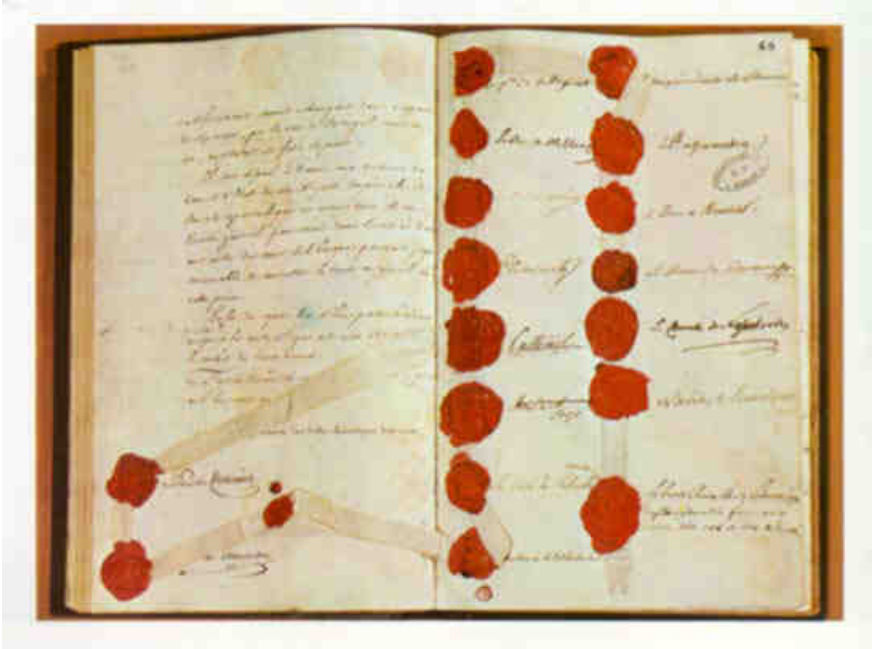
Therefore the covenant could not be carried into effect before the death of Jesus was witnessed. So the new and everlasting covenant had to be sealed with blood, unlike other ordinary covenants made between men.

To fulfil all that had to be fulfilled, Jesus had to succeed in the following objectives on the cross:

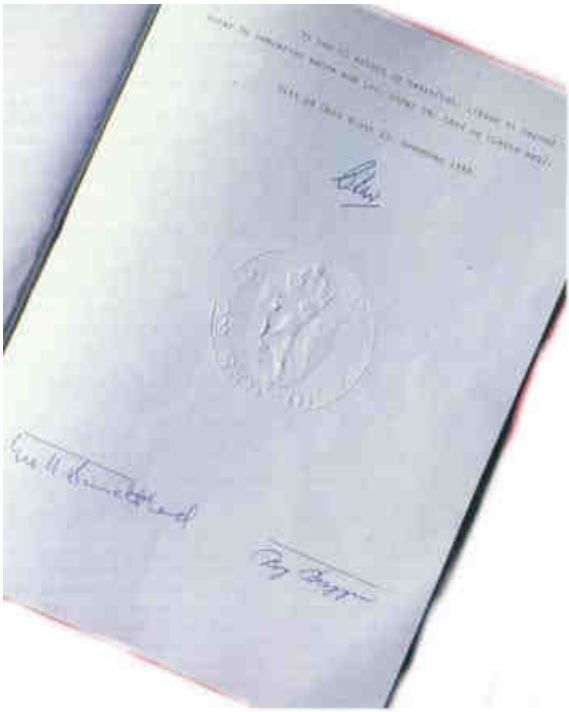
- die for our violations of the law (sins)
- acknowledge the law's right that requires the death of the sinner (fulfil the law's demands)
- fulfil the types of all the sacrificial animals
- fulfil the type of the Passover lamb
- fulfil the type of the goat that was killed on the Day of Atonement
- fulfil the type of the brazen serpent that was held up in the desert by Moses
- fulfil the high priest's ministry
- leave sealed documentation of the New Covenant for all times
- die so that Jesus' testament/will could be carried into effect

The Bible is full of symbols, and the closer you investigate the Scriptures the more types and antitypes you will find. By studying these, you'll see why it all

happened the way it did. No human being will ever be able to exhaust their study of the Scriptures. Everything has a deep and profound meaning. Often we will find simple Bible texts that tells more than one truth, but that does not make them inconsistent with each other. Everything within each Bible text is in perfect harmony with itself, and with the rest of the Bible.



A new agreement between European countries in the Wien congress 1815. Next to each country that had signed, was their seal (informing who they were and the area which they ruled) and the signature was to be put next to the seal.



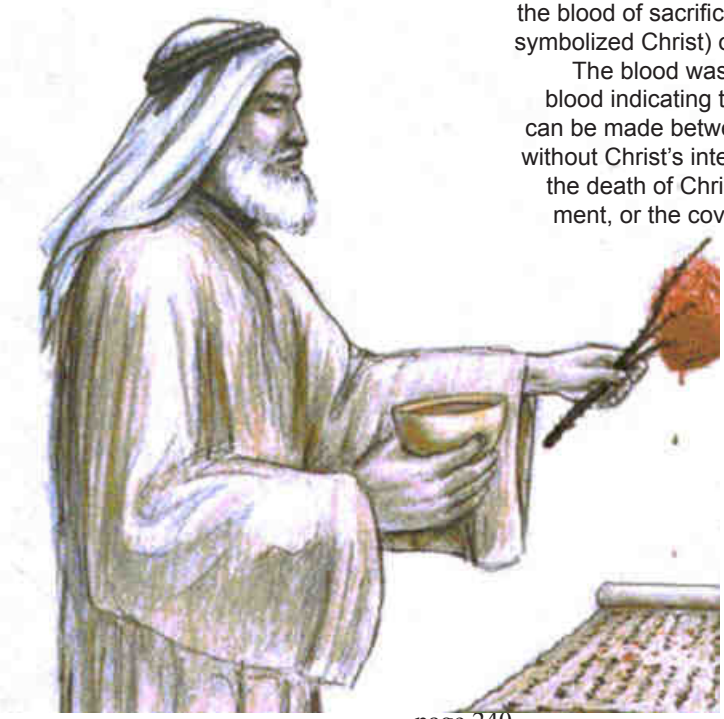
This document is stamped with Norway's seal and is signed by both the prime minister and the king.

All contracts, past and present have to contain:
1) A verbal agreement which has to be written down.
2) A seal which has the title and the identity of the party entering into the covenant.
3) The contract has to be signed so it can be validated.

"And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses…" (Jeremiah 32:10).

"And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it. Now those that sealed were, …(several names are then mentioned)" (Nehemiah 9:38, 10:1).

Moses confirms the Old Covenant. In the covenant between God and the people, blood and water sealed the "contract" or the contents of the covenant. It was not Moses who entered into the covenant with them, it was "I AM". So it was not Moses who had to sign the agreement with his signature. Instead, Moses sprinkled the blood of sacrificial animals (which symbolized Christ) on the agreement. The blood was a type of Christ's blood indicating that no agreement can be made between God and man without Christ's intercession. Only by the death of Christ could the testament, or the covenant, be brought into effect.



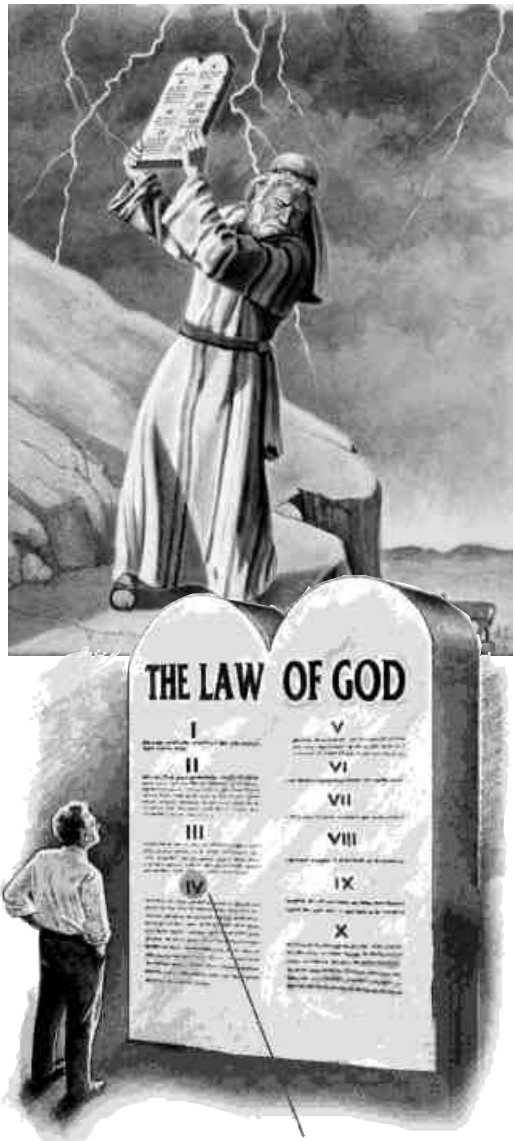
"I AM" sealed the New Covenant on the cross. A covenant that contained forgiveness for sins (by Him dying instead of us) and the law which He said He would write in our hearts. Just as Moses used the blood of sacrificial animals to seal the Old Covenant, I AM's blood was used to seal the New Covenant. But in order for an agreement to be validated around the whole world, it was not enough that it was only sealed by the One entering into the agreement. There must also be a seal in the agreement that reveals the title and the name of the One that enters into the covenant.

If we take a closer look at the only thing I AM wrote down, we find only one place where the title and the area of His reign is mentioned... In the fourth commandment. "…But the seventh day is the sabbath of "I AM" thy God… For in six days "I AM" made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day". (Exodus 20:8-11).

The Sabbath commandment is the only one that reveals:

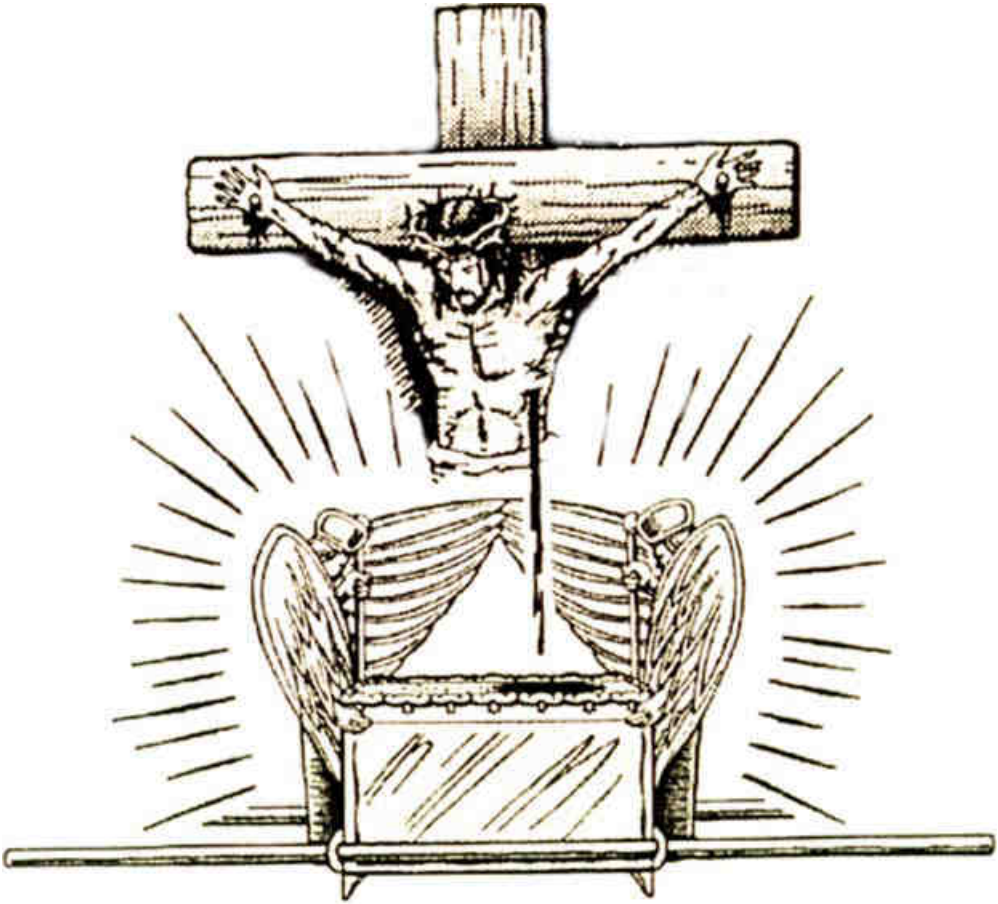
- His name: "I AM"
- His title: "thy God" (Creator)
- His area of reign: "…heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is".

No contract throughout history was considered valid unless the person's title was included. Therefore, the Ten Commandments, when sealed with I AM's blood, became a valid contract.

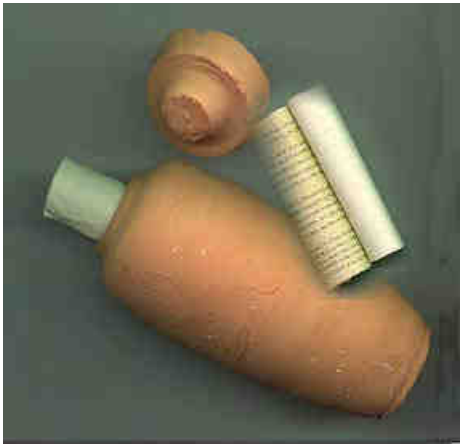


"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy… But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God… For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day".

By showing the world the discovery of Jesus' blood and the Tables of the Law, written with His own finger, God will have produced a contract revealing who He is and what His government's requirements are, and that it is sealed, or validated with Jesus' own blood. By the Testator's death the covenant is carried into effect and can never be changed. The covenant states that Jesus' inheritance to us is that He died instead of us, and that He will give us His Spirit to recreate our hearts so we can keep His law and no longer be under the curse of the law which demands our death. (Ezekiel 36:26-27 & Galatians 3:13). The only remaining factor, is for us to choose to receive the inheritance which is freely offered to us... or to reject it.



The land that Jeremiah bought by God's instruction.
Jeremiah was told to hide the contract, so that it could be a witness of the purchase for a long time afterwards, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days." (Jeremiah 32:14).



The Book of the Covenant was found and read to King Josiah and all the people to show them the covenant God had made with them. It was a time of confusion among the religious communities, just as it is now. So God will do exactly the same now, in this time of confusion, and let everyone see the New Covenant's sealed contract. The Ark of the Covenant is to be shown, with the Tables of the Law and the fourth commandment. All a witness as to who God is (the Creator), the requirements of His government, His title (in His own handwriting), and His blood which sealed the Covenant and made it valid.

SCARLET WOOL AND HYSSOP

Scarlet wool and hyssop
We find more symbols in the confirmation of the Old Covenant, "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people". (Hebrews 9:19). Why was the blood and the water sprinkled on the Book of the Covenant, with scarlet wool and hyssop? What did this symbolise?

In the Bible, scarlet represents sin and wool is used as a symbol of purity, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil… Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:16-18). Scarlet and wool are used to represent two opposites; One of them symbolises purity, and the other sin. In order to understand what "scarlet wool" represents, as with all things, we have to look to Jesus.

Jesus was without sin. He said, "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John 15:10). He was truly the Lamb, "without blemish" (Exodus 12:5) who "offered himself without spot" (Hebrews 9:14). Jesus Christ was "white as wool", but when He was going to die, He had to take on our sins. The White Wool became stained with our scarlet sins. "The next day John seeth

Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14). For, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

He was "wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5). "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus was white as wool. So the wool has to represent Christ. The colour of scarlet represents our sins and transgressions. He took on our sins so that He, as our Substitute and Mediator, could satisfy the demands of the law, which is the sinner's death. "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions" (Hebrews 9:15).

The other material used to sprinkle blood and water on the Book of the Law was hyssop. Again we have to go to the Bible to find the meaning of this symbol, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Psalm 51:7). There is no doubt that hyssop symbolises our cleansing from sin, "…the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7).

Of course, scarlet wool and hyssop were not used when Jesus died on the cross. These things were used by Moses at the confirmation of the Old Covenant to symbolise Jesus' mission as the "Passover Lamb". When Jesus took on our sins, He took our place on death row, at the same time as He cleansed us from our sins.

- In the Bible we find that blood from the sacrificial animals was sprinkled together with water, scarlet wool and hyssop, at the confirmation of the Old Covenant, explained by Paul in Hebrews 9:19.
- Only one time in world history was the True Sacrificial Lamb going to "take our sins on Him" and at the same time "cleanse us", and allow blood and water to flow from His side, and that was at the confirmation of the New Covenant on the cross of Calvary.

Again we see that the confirmation of the Old Covenant was a direct symbol of what was to happen at the confirmation of the New Covenant. Just as Paul indicated in Hebrews 9:15-19.

Since Christ is our Mediator, it is Him we have to make a covenant with. Jesus has promised us that in the New Covenant, He will, "put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jeremiah 31:33). His commandments were not suddenly and surgically put into us at the very moment Jesus died, this can only happen if we receive Him. Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20). If we open the door to Jesus, by letting Him take our sins and cleanse us, He will put the desire to follow His law in us, and write it in our hearts. "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." (John 6:56) "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:27-28) "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Romans 11:27) For "the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD." (Isaiah 59:20).

ANOINTING OF THE MOST HOLY

Anointing of the most Holy
"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." (Daniel 9:24).

What does it mean to anoint the Most Holy? Many people have understood, "to anoint the most Holy" as taking place at the baptism of Christ. They interpret "the most Holy" as Jesus Himself, and that the anointing was His baptism, but does this theory agree with the Scriptures? The Hebrew words for "the most Holy" are "qôdesh haq-qodashim" meaning, "holy thing or place" (Youngs Analytical Concordance to the Bible - Reference Library edition World Bible Publishers Inc., page 488). It is only ever used to describe holy objects, but never to describe people. Thus, we can safely understand that the Bible is saying it is a holy object that was to be anointed, and not a person! Jesus is not an object. The Hebrew word that would have to have been used if it was referring to Jesus, is "gâdêsh", which means a "holy person". As we now know the phrase was not referring to the baptism of Christ, it cannot have been a prophecy about anything other than the anointing of the most holy object on the earth; the Ark of the Covenant. But what does it actually mean, to anoint something? As always, we can find the answer in the Bible, the Word of God, "...and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it." (Exodus 29.36).

Since Daniel's prophecy says that, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city… to anoint the most Holy", it means that it is the earthly city Jerusalem that is the place where this prophecy was to be fulfilled. Indeed, it was in that exact city, Jerusalem, that the Ark of the Covenant was anointed with the blood of Christ.

THE BLOOD ANALYSIS

The analysis of Jesus' blood reveals another point that throughout the ages has been a controversial issue; What nature did Jesus take when He was born on earth as a human being? The Bible is quite clear on this, but still most Christians have accepted a twisted and unbiblical understanding of this. Some say that Jesus took on a nature identical to the nature Adam had before he sinned. Others think that Jesus took on a nature that was identical to that which we are born with today. Which of these two understandings does the Bible teach?

Not only does the blood analysis shed light on this subject, but it exposes the false teachings of popular Judaism and Islam. Both Islam and Judaism believe in the historical existence of Jesus, but deny that He was the Son of God. The Jews consider Him to have been a Jew with exaggerated claims of being the Son of God, and Muslims only understand Him to have been a prophet.

Jesus came in flesh

Much of the reason Jesus came to earth as a human, was to disprove Satan's accusations. Jesus was born of a woman who was no different to any other woman. Many believe that when children are born, they are automatically sinners because they have inherited genes from their parents who are sinners. Therefore they wrongly conclude that it is impossible for Jesus to have been born with the same sinful nature as us. They speculate, that if He was born of a woman with sinful flesh, He would automatically have been a sinner from the

moment He was born. It is not the first time in history that men have believed in original sin. In the prophet Ezekiel's days there were many who thought this way. The LORD said to them, "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die... Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like… he shall not die for the iniquity of his father" (Ezekiel 18:2-17).

By believing that we are sinners the moment we are born, we take away the responsibility we have for our own sins. In so doing we try to shift the blame for us being sinners onto our ancestors. Many are happy to continue sinning for the rest of their lives, and excuse their lack of conversion by saying to themselves, "I was born as a sinner, I cannot help it." Jesus wanted to show us that this is not the case. We become sinners the moment we turn our ear away from God's Spirit and break His law.

Even though Jesus was born in the same sinful flesh as us, He did not sin. He never took part in the act of sinning. Thus He proved to everyone that we are responsible for our own sins. To be born of someone who has sinned does not make anyone a sinner, but to choose to break God's law, does make us sinners. Jesus was free from sin because He kept the law, "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John 15:20). Although "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Hebrews 2:17) and He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus did not have any unfair advantage. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same… For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Hebrews 2:14-17). Jesus took upon Himself a nature like Abraham's children, and not like Adam before he sinned.

An example of this can be seen in the story of Cain and Abel. They were both born of the same mother and father, and sin had already entered the world. Both Cain and Abel had the same genetic inheritance. Their nature came from two sinful parents, but they each chose two different paths. Cain became a murderer,

and Abel chose to follow God. Both had grown up under exactly the same circumstances, the only thing that made them different was the degree by which they allowed themselves to be led by God's Spirit. The more Abel let himself be led, the more he lived a righteous life in harmony with the law of God. But the more Cain resisted the Spirit's guidance, the more he chose to live a life in rebellion and sin. It is the same with us today. None of us are better than others. It is only by the degree we let the Spirit lead us, or by the degree we resist Him that our characters are established. Therefore our life and character is not based on who we were born of, or in what degree our father or mother sinned. Our character depends upon what degree we have let God lead us through His Holy Spirit.

Why has Christianity adopted the idea that Jesus does not have the same nature as us? It is not hard to understand. People have always wanted to excuse their sin instead of regretting it and turning away from it. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do… If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:12-15). Jesus does not tell us to do something that is impossible for us, but He tells us to keep the commandments because it is possible. Jesus would never have told us to do something that was impossible. It is because it is possible with His help to have victory over sin in our life that He told us so.

If we excuse our sin instead of regretting and turning away from it, Satan has won our soul. Jesus cannot forgive us of our sins if we do not regret them, and give them to Him. That is why Satan is so eager to stop us from understanding that sin is not inherited, but is the result of our own decisions and actions. The doctrine that Jesus came with a different nature to us, or came in perfect flesh like Adam, prevents millions from turning away from the sin in their life. If we believe that Jesus came with the same nature as us, we also accept that it is possible to turn from sin and live a new life. This is how we allow Jesus to save us. If we do not accept this truth, we have crossed the boundary of truth and join the majority who blame everyone else for our sins. It is a subtle way that leads to death. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (1 John 4:1-3) "For

many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (2 John 1:7).

The karyotype (chrosome count) of the blood sample Rom Wyatt took shows that Jesus received 23 chromosomes from His human mother, Mary. Even though He lacked any chromosomes from a human father, Christ had no advantages over us. There were no divine, autosomal chromosomes and so His nature was fully human. Instead of Jesus receiving a set of divine chromosomes, He only received 23 from Mary and one Y chromosome from the Holy Spirit which made Him male. So in total He had 24 chromosomes. He had no unfair advantage over us from His genetic make up, as the karyotype shows His nature was only inherited from a normal human being. If Jesus was to receive supernatural help for Him not to sin, He had to access such a help from outside of His own power. Of His own self, He had no more power than you and me. Thus He said, "the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 14:10). Jesus was dependent upon the Holy Spirit, prayer and understanding God's Word just as much as we are. We read how when He was a child, He spent much time studying the Word of God and in prayer. By living submitted to God's Spirit, Christ had victory over sin, despite being in human flesh. He followed precisely the method He told us to follow and was "leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:21-22). He showed us that to be born of God was to receive His Holy Spirit so that we too can at all times resist sin. Therefore we had to be born of the "Spirit" for "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Romans 8:9). "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5:3-4).

Christ, whilst in human flesh, won the victory over sin, in the same way as He asks us to. Victory is achieved by walking in the Spirit and not after the flesh. It is to accept power from God to keep His law and not to follow our own sinful desires. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16). If we understand that Jesus used the same means as we can to avoid sin, we are without excuse if we do not follow His example. The only way someone can label themselves a Christian and still use this excuse, is by claiming that Jesus did not have the same nature as us, and therefore we will never be able to be like Him and stop sinning, even with God's help. The mes-

sage of the antichrist is designed to destroy Christ's mission. It makes people believe that they are saved when they are still in their sins, and are not converted. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14) and "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:11).

Jesus was the Son of God

Judaism and Islam deny that Jesus was the Son of God. The Jews were given a prophecy concerning their coming Messiah, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14). But many of the Jews said about Jesus, "Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:22). Even today the Jews maintain that Jesus was nothing more than the son of Mary and Joseph, and not God's Son as He claimed, but they were told "the Lord himself shall give you a sign". Again, God will give the Jews this sign. The analysis of the blood of Christ proves that He did not have a human father. The autosomal chromosomes that should have been present if He had an earthly father are not present. There are no chromosomes from Joseph. Mary had to have been a virgin, and had a Son without any intervention from a man. Jesus really was a Child without a human father. Not only are the prophecies true, but also the accounts concerning His birth, written at a time when it was not possible to understand or to analyse Jesus' chromosomes. Jesus was the Messiah, the One who was to "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Daniel 9:27) and was indeed "brought as a lamb to the slaughter", so "shall Messiah be cut off" (Isaiah 53:7, Daniel 9:26). But He was also without an earthly father. Everything happened just as it had been prophesied, and Messiah was "cut off" after 483 years (or 69 prophetic weeks) as it is prophesied in the book of Daniel. "I AM" (as Jesus claimed to be), was killed as the antitypical "sacrificial animal". He was slaughtered as a sacrifice for Israel's and the world's sins. Throughout history the Israelites had broken God's covenant by repeatedly worshiping other gods. Time and time again He forgave them. When He came to save them, instruct them and forgive them one more time, they murdered Him. They once trembled with fear before Him as He spoke from Mount Sinai, but now they scorn Him, and when He was hanging on the cross He cried, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34).

He who was once manifested in a majestic pillar of cloud above the Mercy Seat

of the Ark of the Covenant, was now beaten, nailed to a cross, and was once again hanging over the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant; but this time, to save the world.

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:1-12) "As many were astonied at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their they consider." (Isaiah 52:14 & 15).

Again God will call on the descendants of Israel and offer them salvation. The discovery of the Ark of the Covenant and the blood of Jesus will be another outstretched hand to them, appealing to them to believe and accept the message of salvation. "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1

Timothy 2:6). And many of the Jews will accept this appeal, “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.” (Hosea 3:4-5).

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

The three messages

The last warning message that is to be given to the world is found in the 14th chapter of the Book of Revelation; a message from three angels. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God… Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:6-12).

The first angel's message tells us of the judgement in heaven that has begun and that has also been documented in this book. This message reached the world in the years following 1844 and many books have since been written on this subject. One of the greatest and most widespread books which explains the judgement that began in heaven in 1844, is the book "The Great Controversy" by Ellen G. White. A book that has been translated into many, many languages. The second and third angel's message, declaring "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" is covered later in Part Five.

The third message
The last message to the world is a warning against receiving "the Mark of the Beast" or to worship "the beast" or "his image" and at the same time tells us what kind of faith God's people must have. There are two characteristics that describe "the saints", "they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12).

The LORD will let the Tables of Stone be shown to remind the whole world that they are still valid. This is especially important for those Christians who are unaware that their theology is influenced more by the deceiver than by God. All who have trampled upon God's law, will have one last chance to accept "the love of the truth, that they might be saved." (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Particularly the Protestant and Catholic world, who claim the ability to change God's law by changing the fourth commandment (His Sabbath) to Sunday, will be shown this error. God does not intend for these Tables of Stone to be shown in order to frighten anyone, but so that everyone can clearly understand the issues, and, after being warned, make their choice. Many have been deceived, and Jesus does not want to come back before all have had the chance to accept the truth and be forgiven for all their sins. He will remind them of the words He spoke in the Old Testament and that He confirmed in the New Testament, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7).

"The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word." He also explains why this was to happen, "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, *changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." (Isaiah 24:3-6).

The blood of Jesus is the key, because the blood that sealed the covenant is a

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* "changed the ordinance": The original Hebrew text uses the word "châlaph" meaning, "change, take away", and, "choq" meaning, "an agreement" (concerning time). Thus, the phrase can also correctly be read, "...changed or taken away an agreement "

witness as to what the covenant actually is.

The devil's mission is, and has always been, to make war against God's commandments, and therefore the Lawmaker Himself, and those who keep His commandments, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, (the church) and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17).

Since the third angel's message tells us that the saints are, "they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus", the third angel's message also tells us how we can receive the law in our hearts, and keep it by Christ's Spirit and grace, and have victory over sin in the flesh. God does not expect anything from anyone without first telling them how it is possible for them to fulfil the requirements.

So when will Jesus actually return? When the whole world has gathered under one kingdom of peace for God? No, the Bible reveals how the end will be. The prophet Daniel asked when was Jesus going to return, after he had received visions of the last days, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" Daniel asked. Then came the answer, "when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." (Daniel 12:6-7).

When "the holy people" who are "they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" can no longer reach anyone with the message of God's reconciliation and His law, then there is no longer anyone to reach, and there is no reason for Jesus to continue to make atonement in the sanctuary. At that moment, He leaves the Most Holy, and those who have not accepted Him will then have to accept the punishment for their own sins. When there is no longer anyone willing to be saved on earth, He ends His work of atonement in heaven, and comes to take His people to heaven, where He is, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:3).

Those who have accepted Jesus' blood in their stead and received His Spirit, will have had victory over all previous sins by Jesus' sacrifice. They have also allowed Jesus to write His law in their hearts and minds, and have been born "of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5).

When Jesus leaves the Most Holy in heaven to return to earth and bring His people to heaven, He says, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:11-14).

Part 5
The MARK OF THE BEAST

"One of the angels stepped forward and began to speak to Ron. They told Ron that they were the four angels, assigned to guard the Ark since it's fabrication. Ron approached the Ark, and was instructed to remove the Tables of Stone from the Ark, and the angel placed them in a niche in the wall, and proceeded to inform Ron of various important matters. The Tables of Stone were not going to be put on public display until after a law would be passed, that would eventually spread throughout the entire world. A law that would force everyone to receive, "the mark of the beast"."

(From page 79 in this book.)

THE RELIGIOUS CHAOS

Satan's War Against God

The battle that Satan and his angels are waging against God the Father, Jesus His Son and the Spirit, seems incomprehensible to many. They do not understand how God could allow man to fall, or why God allows Satan to cause havoc on earth. Strangely, while on the one hand they deny God, and do not want anything to do with Him, when misfortune inevitably strikes them or their family, it is God they blame for the evil, since He allows it. When human beings place themselves outside of God's protection by choosing not to have anything to do with Him, God allows them to live as they choose; not to punish them, but because He never forces a person's will. So if He was to stop the cruelties which today take place on earth, He would have to undermine mankind's free will. Not only that, but He would have to imprison practically the entire population of earth, so that none could commit the offences they constantly desire. If one person commits a small sin it can lead someone else to commit a greater sin. In this way, every action against God's principles results in the destruction of someone or something. God has made a plan in order to put an end to all misery, a plan which also shows other worlds He has created, that He has been just in His actions, toward every single person.

The Divinity

Satan's rebellion against God began with a disagreement about His method of government. Satan claimed that God's way of ruling the universe was oppressing their freedom, but as Satan's ideology was unravelled, it became clear that

it was God who cherished a person's full rights to a free will. Although Satan's ideology was gradually exposed as being the opposite of what he claimed it was, he stubbornly refused to repent and apologise for his error. Instead the real reason for his rebellion was unmasked. He did not care for the welfare of God's created beings as much as he cared for his own selfish ambition to become like God himself. He coveted universal power for himself.

The Bible reveals that the Father and the Son were together when creating the earth and that they are one in character and intention (Genesis 1:2, Genesis 1:26, 1 John 1:1-3). Concerning God, it is written, "No man hath seen God at any time." (1 John 4:12). But throughout the Old Testament there are several patriarchs and prophets who have talked with the LORD, "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (Exodus 33:11), and, "...they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Genesis 3:8-10).

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18). Nobody has seen God, but Jesus has revealed Himself to many of the patriarchs and prophets, and eventually He was born into this world. Regarding the relationship between God the Father and Himself, Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30). Later, in His prayer to the Father, He gave a deeper explanation of what the word "one" means, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." (John 17:11). The meaning shows that Jesus, "Ego Eimi", and God are two separate Persons, but have the same character. It is also written that Jesus has been with God from the beginning, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:1-3).

Since Jesus always "has declared Him (God)" and exalted the Father it became easier for many to look upon Jesus as someone less important. However, Jesus said that God and Him were as one, and it is explained that Jesus has always

been together with God and that everything which is created, is created of God by Jesus. Jesus' purpose was to represent and reveal God to all creation. In this way everyone saw Jesus, or "Ego Eimi", who "declared" God. Satan, who was a creature of high ranking, refused to acknowledge that Christ was any "greater" than he. Therefore, Satan did not recognise Christ's authority, despite Christ being his Creator, and Satan just being a part of creation. Concerning Satan it is written, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isaiah 14:13-14). Satan did not want to "be like the most High" in character, but He wanted the power of the Most High. He wanted to be looked upon as greater than Christ and to take the place of God.

The earth is placed under Satan

In his attempt to usurp God's authority, Satan tried to convince the angels and other "principalities and powers" that God and Jesus Christ were unfair and oppressive in their rulership. When Satan determined to no longer recognise the moral law of the universe, he quite easily used lies and subversive strategy to turn other creatures against God. Sin had not existed before, and so it was hard for many to understand that Satan was actually lying about God. The Book of Revelation tells us that Satan led a third of the angels with him in his rebellion (see Revelation 12:4). When Satan lost his position in heaven, he declared direct war upon God and His government, and those who had chosen to remain faithful to God. Satan was attempting to overthrow God's universal power and authority. Satan lost the battle, but many of God's created beings were still confused over everything Satan had claimed. They were still unsure about what was truth. The only way God could prevent sin from spreading, was to allow Satan the freedom to act out his method of government. Everyone was forewarned, and the only place Satan was accepted was on planet earth. Mankind had shown loyalty to him, and Satan usurped the earth, even though God and Jesus had created it. Mankind had been given the earth and everything in it, but after they placed themselves under Satan they became slaves instead of masters on earth. Satan's plan proved to only create misery and oppression among mankind. Everyone could see how wrong Satan had been in his accusation against God, but instead of admitting his error and repenting, Satan decided to do all he could to destroy as much as possible.

The first religion

When Satan realised that God and His Son had developed a plan of salvation

that gave mankind a chance to escape misery, and still be a part of God's kingdom, Satan put all his efforts into preventing man from accepting this, and thus caused utter confusion. God loved mankind and wanted to save them, so Satan wanted to do all he could to hurt those who God loved, so that he could hurt God.

So that is how the mass of religious chaos began in the world. God made sure that man would understand the plan of salvation and what was necessary to partake of it. Since Satan won very few people by his blatant hatred towards man and God, he realised that the only way of preventing man from receiving salvation, was to make them believe they obtained salvation, when actually they did not. If they believed that Satan was the highest god and creator, they would follow him in all he commanded. Therefore he had to create a false god. Satan developed his own religion by counterfeiting God's plan just enough to make people believe they were "safe" by worshiping this god. So Satan gave them a god, and one who represented this god (in the same way as Jesus represented the Father) and offered man an immortal soul if they worshiped these two gods. The religion was going to have counterfeits that very closely resembled all that God's plan of salvation had, but the essential difference was that the false religion was going to build on Satan's law and not God's. In this way Satan was going to be worshiped by man as if he himself was God and creator, something he would never have had success in if he had appeared in his true identity. At the same time he succeeded in closing the way to salvation for many people by making them believe that they would still be saved. If man already believed that he had immortality through this false religion, he would feel no need to listen to the true plan of salvation, nor seek any further for truth.

Man now faced two choices, either to worship the Creator or to choose Satan's alternative religion, which indirectly gave Satan the honour as creator and god. Human sacrifices became usual in this religion, while the only human sacrifice God required, was His Own Son's voluntary sacrifice.

Satan's religion began at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 10:10) after the flood. The leader, Nimrod (Genesis 10:8) became Satan's most important tool in developing this counterfeit plan of salvation. Concerning the starry skies the Bible tells us, "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." (Psalm 147:4). These constellations which God had named, became one of the sources of the counterfeits to God's plan of salvation. Constellations which

reveal the story of "a virgin", "a woman with child" and so on, were corrupted to tell a different story. Instead of admiring God's lesson in the stars, man began to worship the constellations, the moon and the sun as if they were gods themselves.

Satan's desire to be worshiped as the creator of the universe

Satan was previously called, "Lucifer, son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12), but after his rebellion, he was stripped of his name, title and authority in heaven. But Satan, was not prepared to accept his loss. His new, counterfeit religion was called, "Sun worship". He wanted his representatives under him, to have similar positions as Jesus held towards God. Thus he created great confusion, as these two religions resembled each other so closely. Satan had finally managed to trick man into regarding him in the position which only God held. Thus he had boasted, "I will be like the most High." Satan's new religion had a completely different structure and character than God's. The subtle differences in theology became the test as to what was false and what was true. The new sun worship was going to be the basis of all the world religions, and could run along side the true religion of the Bible. All systems of religion have the same main foundations and principles as the religion of Babylon, even though with time, they have adopted their own distinct customs and traditions too.

Babylon, under the rule of Nimrod, was the founder of this religion where they worshipped the sun god. In Egypt, it was said concerning the sun god, "Ra was regarded as the creator of the universe, and was viewed together with Osiris as the source of life after death. Every sundown symbolized a repetition of the original creation of the universe, made possible by the rejuvenation of the sun god himself." (The British Museum: Egyptology, Attitudes to death). In the Egyptian book, "The Book of Amucat" it is taught that the sun god, during his journey through the underworld, was renewed by giving life to the dead. The sun god was given the title of creator and one who could give life to the dead. Therefore rebirth for mortals depended on close association with Ra. By the creation of sun worship, Satan succeeded in stealing the worship, along with the titles, that belong only to God. Through sun worship, Satan was worshiped as the creator and the giver of life, and his representatives as messiahs, or false christs.

There was only one Creator. People had to think and choose. Since Satan's false

plan of salvation and false gods were presented in a way that made it acceptable to break God's law, the vast majority chose to follow Satan's counterfeit.

The world's main religion

When this false religion had spread across the whole world, there were only a few left who worshiped the true Creator and believed in the true plan of salvation as it was taught throughout the generations. Noah, who was Nimrod's great-grandfather, lived up until the time of Abraham and could expose the falsehood of this new and popular religion. Abraham was chosen of God to keep the true religion pure, and pass it down to his children. Thus it was passed down to Isaac, Jacob and the Israelites. Sun worship was still so widespread that the Israelites' neighbouring nations were all followers. Several places in the Israelites history, we can read how sun worship was mixed with their belief in God, and how they began to practise this form of worship. This was strongly rebuked by the LORD, and He called them again and again from this counterfeit religion. The people thought that since they all worshiped some kind of creator, and both religions had some kind of plan of salvation which included the birth of a son by a virgin, and a god who would raise them from death, and other such similarities, then surely they had to be worshiping the same god. In this way Satan attempted to lure the Israelites into his own ideology, accompanied by sun worship.

Later, during the Christian era, Satan continued with the same tactics to deceive people into believing that his religion was the same as the true, and so make everyone worship him as creator. In order to succeed in luring people away from God and His salvation, he had to win their obedience, subtly drawing them away from obedience to God. As they thought they were worshiping the true God they felt no need to search for Him anymore.

Despite the fact that Jesus was one with God and that He created Lucifer, Lucifer's wish to make Jesus subservient surfaced again when Christ came to earth as a human being. "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Matthew 4:8-9).

The earth, which Jesus had created but where Satan was honoured, was now offered to Jesus if only He would worship Satan. Jesus of course refused

Satan's offer, for Satan does not have a right to such worship. Jesus rebuked the deceiver, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4:10).

Even now, among the world's religious confusion, it is still easy to recognise Satan's counterfeit religions which began in Babylon. We find it in modern, ancient, and tribal religions alike, and also in most Christian churches. Satan has weaved this religion in everywhere where he has had opportunity. Many people look upon the different religions as evidence that all religion is futile, and so Satan's confusion has also succeeded in producing theories on evolution and atheism.

In our time, the world will once again be confronted with a choice; Do we want to worship the true Creator, or worship Satan as the creator? Who is our God? Who are we giving our loyalty to? There will be a sign which clearly shows who people choose to worship as their Creator. A sign which will reveal who they obey and give loyalty to. This is where the Bible's warning against "the Mark of the Beast" enters the stage.

THE BEAST

Many look at the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation in the Bible, as mythological or something that is impossible to understand. But the Bible is both logically and ingeniously constructed. The Book of Revelation is not impossible to understand, but the truth has been suffocated in a world of misinterpretation; one of Satan's most successful plots to distract attention from the true interpretation. With so many interpretations, some people make their decision without proper knowledge of the Bible. They chose the interpretation that sounds most comfortable to them, according to their own personal understanding. What now follows, are not the sealed books of Daniel and Revelation, but the open books. The book of Revelation was not to be sealed in order that it not be possible to understand, but it is rather, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1). John was told, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." (Revelation 22:10). According to Jesus Christ and God the Father, we are to understand this book, and not just us today, but all those generations since it was written. In this way every generation could follow and understand the "things which must shortly come to pass".

One of Revelation's most important issues is the "beast" that would, "rise up out of the sea" in Chapter 13. This is a power which will deceive the whole world before Jesus comes back (verse 8). And the number of this power is 666 (verse 18). The Bible teaches that those who choose to follow this power, will be lost, since this power is antichrist (verse 8). Those who follow the beast, will receive

a mark in their forehead or in the hand (verse 16). This mark is called "the mark of the beast" (verse 17). All these will be the last and final events before Christ's second coming.

The prophecy of the "beast" and "the mark of the beast" is not sealed, and we are meant to understand what and who this is now. The Bible gives dozens of identifying characteristics of who the beast is, leaving no room for any doubt. Those who have studied the Bible without giving place to man's interpretation concerning the books of Daniel and Revelation, have always known who the beast is, and have been able to follow it's development. Just as God intended the prophecy to be used, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass..." (Revelation 1:1). The book of Revelation is Jesus' personal warning to us, who live in the last days. It is Jesus Himself who gives this warning not to follow the beast or receive it's mark. Jesus pleads with us; helping us not to be deceived and forever lost.

But what about the popular doctrine among Christians, "once saved, always saved"? This belief lacks truth. For our whole life we have a free will which we use to choose what we do. Your acceptance and belief in Christ does not take away your free will to choose something else later. God created man with a free will and will never remove it from us. Therefore Jesus gives this revelation and warning, so people will not use their free will to choose what is wrong.

So who is this antichrist beast, who has the number 666? According to John he was already active in his time, but Paul explains that he had not yet gained all the power he was to later accumulate (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10 & 1 John 4:3). As we mentioned, the Bible offers dozens of identifying signs as to who the antichrist, or this beast is. And only one power in the history of the world fits all. The Book of Revelation fits like a hand in a glove with the Book of Daniel, and together they expose, "the man of sin" who shall deceive the whole world (Revelation 13:8).

The great kingdoms

In Babylon, the king, Nebuchadnezzar, had a dream which revealed the great kingdoms that would come into power (Daniel 2). Daniel the prophet received instruction from God to interpret this dream for King Nebuchadnezzar, and

more particularly, to record it for us. Nebuchadnezzar saw a statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron and feet of iron mingled with clay (Daniel 2:31-34). Each part of the statue represented the world empires that would rise and fall, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's. The first three kingdoms Daniel names as Babylon, Media-Persia and Greece. Just as the Bible prophesied, it happened. Babylon fell and Media-Persia took over the empire, after that Alexander the Great followed with the Greek Empire. The next great kingdom that arose, was the Roman Empire, represented on the statue as the iron kingdom. This fourth kingdom is also described in detail in Revelation 13, and it was from this kingdom, the beast and antichrist would appear.

So let us dig deeper, and take a closer look at the prophecy. In Daniel 7 the revelation of the four great kingdoms is repeated, but this time they are described as four different beasts. Each beast portrays the characteristics of the kingdom they represent. If we go to the fourth beast, the Roman empire, we can read how it is to develop. But firstly, notice that Paul tells us, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed" (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8). The Roman kingdom, the fourth beast, was in existence in Paul's time, but Paul explains that there would be a change to Rome as they knew it, before the antichrist would be revealed.

The change of the Roman kingdom

The fourth beast that was shown to Daniel, had ten horns. The change that Paul tried to describe is thoroughly explained in Daniel's description of the fourth beast, the Roman kingdom, "...a fourth beast... had ten horns." The angel who interpreted the vision, said that this meant ten kingdoms would arise from the Roman Empire, and this is exactly what happened in the fifth century AD. The Roman Empire fell and was divided between the Germanic races: Alamanni, Franks, Burgundians, Suevi, Saxons, Visigoths, Lombards, and the Vandals, Ostrogoths, Heruli. The last of the ten divisions was formed in AD 476. We see an even deeper explanation of what was to happen, in order that "the man of sin", also called the antichrist or the beast, would be revealed.

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn" (Daniel 7:8). Just as the other ten kingdoms came from the Roman Empire,

this new, "little horn" would also arise from the Roman Empire (the horn grew out of the head of the beast, which is the Roman Empire).

Rome's power was depleted because of the division, but it had undergone other changes too. From being a pagan kingdom it had now become a so-called, "Christian", Papal kingdom. The "little horn" rising up amongst the other ten kingdoms represented the new nature of Rome, from pagan to papal. Papal Rome wanted to regain the power that Rome once had, but would attempt to regain it under a different guise. "Whatever Roman elements the barbarians and Arians left... [came] under the protection of the Bishop of Rome, who was the chief person there after the Emperor's disappearance... The Roman Church in this way privily pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation; the empire has not perished, but has only undergone a transformation... It [the Catholic Church] is a political creation, and as imposing as a World-Empire, because it is a continuation of the Roman Empire. The Pope, who calls himself 'King' and 'Pontifex Maximus' [The title of the Roman Empire in the time of Christ], is Caesar's successor." (Adolf Harnack, What is Christianity? 1903, pages 252-253)

"[Speaking of the time, about 500AD, when the Roman Empire was crumbling to pieces] No, the [Catholic] Church will not descend into the tomb. It will survive the Empire. At length a second empire will arise, and of this empire the Pope will be the master – more than this, he will be the master of Europe. He will dictate his orders to kings who will obey them." (Andrea Lagarde, The Latin Church in the Middle Ages, 1915, page 6).

"Out of the ruins of political Rome, arose the great moral Empire in the 'giant form' of the Roman Church" (A.C.Flick, The Rise of the Mediaeval Church, 1909, p.150)

PROPHETIC VISIONS IN DANIEL CHAPTER 2 & 7

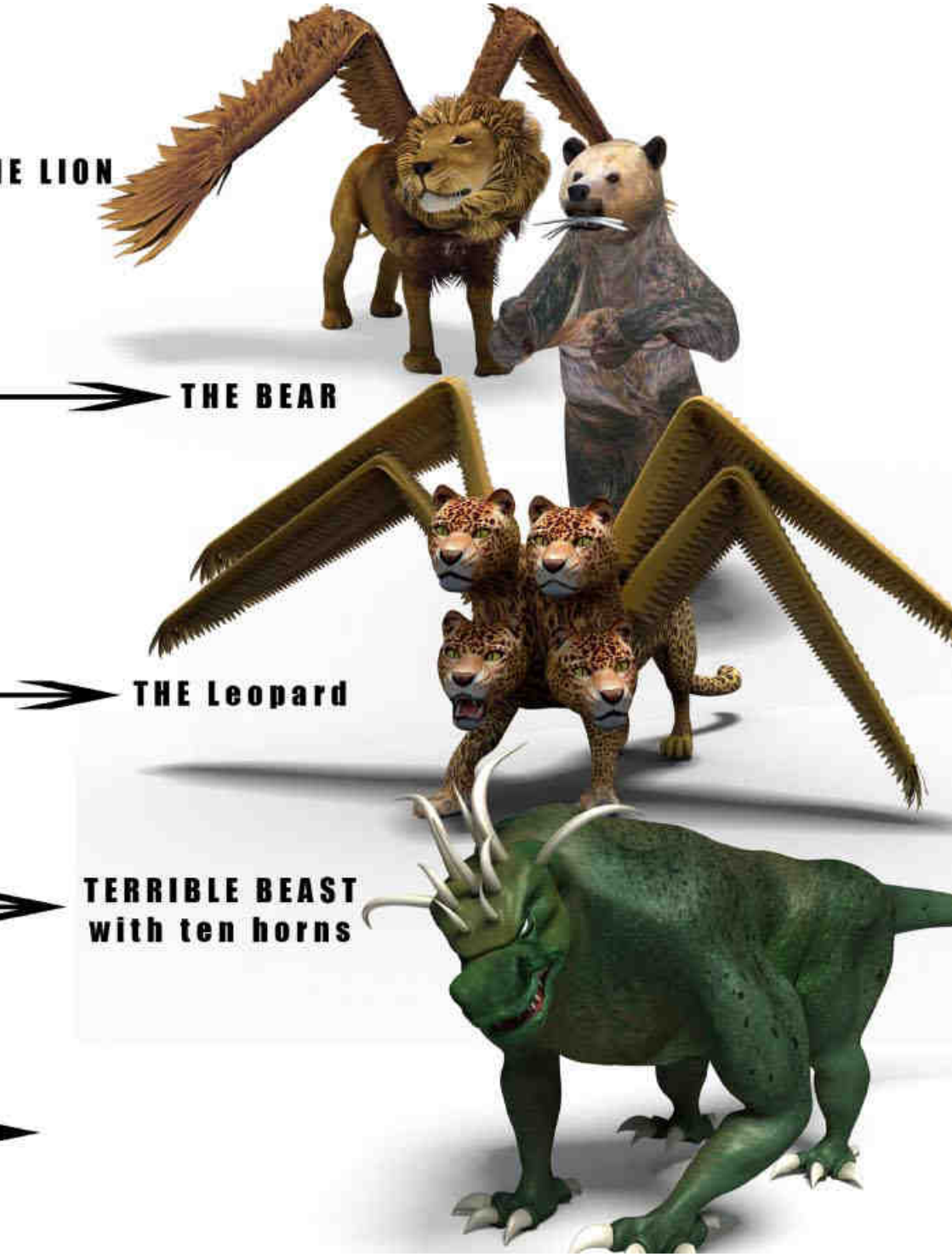
Babylon

Media - Persia

Greece

The Roman Empire

Divided kingdom
and the blasphemous little horn


IE LION
THE BEAR
THE Leopard
TERRIBLE BEAST
with ten horns

Exactly as Paul had prophesied concerning the Roman Empire, a change came about before "the man of sin" appeared.

The little horn subdues three kings.
Let's dig a little deeper, "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots" (Daniel 7:8). The three kingdoms, the Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Heruli refused to submit to the new power. These three tribes refused to ally themselves to the Roman power, which had become a combination of chuch and state. Furthermore they refused to acknowledge the authority of the Pope. As long as these three tribes rebelled against Papal Rome, she could never make progress and regain the power she sought. Soon the Pope received the support he needed from the other kingdoms, and the Heruli in 493, Vandals in 534 and Ostrogoths in 538 were destroyed. The three kingdoms were "plucked up" to give way to the "little horn". "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings." (Daniel 7:23&24).

"…and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking

great things." (Daniel 7:8). The horn, or the power that needed to subdue three kingdoms to have her empire grow, had the eyes and mouth of a man. It was to have a man as its leader.

The little horn mocks God

Paul prophesied that there would be a falling away before this "leader" would come (2 Thessalonians 2:3). When Christians began to allow paganism and all their customs to enter the church, this falling away started. Daniel tells us about the leader of this new "paganised Christianity", "in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things… And he shall speak great words against the most High" (Daniel 7:8 & 25). The Book of Revelation describes the very same thing, "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (Revelation 13:5). Paul gives a more detailed explanation as to what kind of blasphemy it is, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thessalonians 2:4). When Paul uses the word "temple" in the New Testament, he means the Christian church. A power was to arise where a man was to make himself as God, and this was to happen in a Christian church that had fallen away from the pure biblical faith.

Let us look at the Catholic Church's (Papal Rome) own words concerning the head of their church, "The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself hidden under the veil of the flesh. Does the Pope speak? It is Jesus Christ who speaks. Does the Pope accord a favor or pronounce an anathema? It is Jesus Christ who pronounces the anathema or accords the favor. So that when the Pope speaks we have no business to examine. We have only to obey. We have no right to criticize his direction or discuss his commands." (The Archbishop of Venice, prior to becoming Pope Pius X.)

Pope Leo XIII claimed: "We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." (Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter of June 20, 1894)

"All the names which in the Scripture are applied to Christ, by virtue of which it is established that he is over the church, all the same names are applied to the Pope." (Robert Bellarmine, On the Authority of the Councils, chapter 17, 1628 ed., vol 1, p.266)

"The Church of Rome is one monarchy over all the kingdoms of the earth, and is, among temporal bodies, as the mind or the soul of the body of man, or as God in the world. Therefore the Church of Rome must not only have the spiritual power, but also the supreme temporal power." (Encyclical of Pope Leo XXIII, 1879.)

"The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God... The Pope by reason of the excellence of his supreme dignity is called bishop of bishops... He is likewise bishop of the universal church... He is likewise the divine monarch and supreme emperor, and King of kings... Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as King of heaven and earth and of the lower regions." (Lucius Ferraris, Prompta Bibliotheca, vol.6, p.29.)

The little horn tries to change God's law

Daniel gives us yet another identifying characteristic regarding the little horn power, "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws" (Daniel 7:25). The papacy attempted this very thing and in doing so, tried to exalt themselves above the only true Lawgiver. The pope thought himself qualified to do this because he regarded himself "king over heaven and earth", and therefore found no problem in changing any of God's commandments and replacing them with his own. Thus he boldly disregarded Christ's words on the matter, "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law" (Matthew 5:18) and ignored the fact that the Bible says, "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). The Catholic Church declares, "The pope has power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ." (Decretal de Translat, Episcop.cap)

The Catholic Church's own writings expose themselves. The prophecy identifying this power fits perfectly, "And he shall speak great words against the most High… and think to change times and laws" (Daniel 7:25). Does not this power indeed speak, "great words against the most High" when they exalt their own doctrine above Christ's thus breaking the Scripture?

They claim they have removed the second commandment that forbids the worship of images, statues and idols. In order to maintain the number of command-

ments as ten, they divided the last commandment into two. Perhaps the boldest change of all was that which was made to the fourth commandment, the Sabbath commandment. The only commandment that testifies as to who the true Lawgiver really is; the LORD, "I AM". The commandment that testifies that He is the Creator and identifies His territory, and was a sign between the Creator and His creation. The papacy removed the entire part of the law that identifies the Lawgiver and Creator, and broke the commandment and changed it from the seventh day (sunset Friday until sunset Saturday), to the first day, Sunday. All this the Bible foretold hundreds of years before.

The little horn persecutes the saints – Part 1

Daniel continues, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them" (Daniel 7:21). The Christians that remained obedient to the Bible and refused to take part in this new type of paganised Christianity, were severely persecuted. They refused to obey the so-called "Vicar of Christ", knowing the words Christ once spoke, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Therefore they refused to acknowledge the pope's alteration of the law of God, and continued to keep it as it was written in Scripture. They held the seventh day Sabbath holy, and refused to use images in their worship as the second commandment forbids.

It was forbidden by law for the Bible to be read by the public, as only the Catholic priests were considered learned enough to read it. By such methods they took total control over how the Bible was interpreted to the people, allowing no one to challenge their interpretation as they themselves had no access to the Bible. Whoever opposed the church was tortured, killed, or burnt at the stake as, "heretics" and this continued on throughout the Middle Ages and indeed long after the Reformation began.

"But of those who resisted the encroachments of the papal power, the Waldenses stood foremost. In the very land where popery had fixed its seat, there its falsehood and corruption were most steadfastly resisted. For centuries the churches of Piedmont maintained their independence; but the time came at last when Rome insisted upon their submission. After ineffectual struggles against her tyranny, the leaders of these churches reluctantly acknowledged the supremacy of the power to which the whole world seemed to pay homage.

There were some, however, who refused to yield to the authority of pope or prelate. They were determined to maintain their allegiance to God and to preserve the purity and simplicity of their faith. A separation took place. Those who adhered to the ancient faith now withdrew; some, forsaking their native Alps, raised the banner of truth in foreign lands; others retreated to the secluded glens and rocky fastnesses of the mountains, and there preserved their freedom to worship God.

The faith which for centuries was held and taught by the Waldensian Christians was in marked contrast to the false doctrines put forth from Rome. Their religious belief was founded upon the written word of God, the true system of Christianity. But those humble peasants, in their obscure retreats, shut away from the world, and bound to daily toil among their flocks and their vineyards, had not by themselves arrived at the truth in opposition to the dogmas and heresies of the apostate church. Theirs was not a faith newly received. Their religious belief was their inherit-

Top: The building where the Waldenses copied and distributed the Bible from, & held Bible classes, is still in existence today, and has been turned into a museum. Bottom: The mountain range where the Waldenses went into hiding under the most terrible persecution.

Entrance to a cave that was used for church services when they were prohibited. While the Catholic Church decorated their churches with gold, the Waldenses were forced to worship their Creator under severly deprived conditions.
Top: Historians record the cruel excecutions of the Waldenses, who refused to convert to Catholicism.

ance from their fathers. They contended for the faith of the apostolic church, "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3). "The church in the wilderness," and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the world's great capital, was the true church of Christ, the guardian of the treasures of truth which God has committed to His people to be given to the world.

Among the leading causes that had led to the separation of the true church from Rome was the hatred of the latter toward the Bible Sabbath. As foretold by prophecy, the papal power cast down the truth to the ground. The law of God was trampled in the dust, while the traditions and customs of men were exalted. The churches that were under the rule of the papacy were early compelled to honour the Sunday as a holy day. Amid the prevailing error and superstition, many, even of the true people of God, became so bewildered that while they observed the Sabbath, they refrained from labour also on the Sunday. But this did not satisfy the papal leaders. They demanded not only that Sunday be hallowed, but that the Sabbath be profaned; and they denounced in the strongest language those who dared to show it honor. It was only by fleeing from the power of Rome that any could obey God's law in peace.

The Waldenses were among the first of the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Hundreds of

years before the Reformation they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated, and this rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution. They declared the Church of Rome to be the apostate Babylon of the Apocalypse, and at the peril of their lives they stood up to resist her corruptions. While, under the pressure of long-continued persecution, some compromised their faith, little by little yielding its distinctive principles, others held fast the truth. Through ages of darkness and apostasy there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome, who rejected image worship as idolatry, and who kept the true Sabbath. Under the fiercest tempests of opposition they maintained their faith. Though gashed by the Savoyard spear, and scorched by the Romish fagot, they stood unflinchingly for God's word and His honour.

Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains--in all ages the refuge of the persecuted and oppressed--the Waldenses found a hiding place. Here the light of truth was kept burning amid the darkness of the Middle Ages. Here, for a thousand years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith."
(The Great Controversy, E.G.White, pages 64-65).

The little horn persecutes the saints - Part II

The little horn that grows out of the beast of Daniel 7, is the same power described in Revelation 13:1-10 as a, "beast" that will, "rise up out of the sea". The description and various prophecies pertaining to this beast are identical to Daniel's description of the "little horn" but with some further details. This same beast rising up out of the sea is that which the Bible designates the number 666. Here, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him" takes us one step further, "to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1).

Let us stay in the past a little longer. The Bible tells us that it was the dragon, which is Satan, which gave its power to the beast (the papacy). In addition to that, it says that the dragon went to make war against they, "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17). When we understand that the dragon, or Satan is furious with those who have the faith of Jesus and keep God's commandments, and we understand that it is Satan who gave power to the beast (the papacy), it is easier to understand why the papacy once enforced a death decree upon all those who kept the true

The Little Horn (Daniel 7)	The Beast that rise up out of the sea (Revelation13)
A mouth speaking great things	A mouth speaking great things and blasphemies
He shall speak great words against the Most High, and ...think to change times and laws	Blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven
He shall wear out the saints of the Most High	Making war with the saints
Time of power: a time and times and the dividing of time (3.5 years or 1260 days)	Power given to continue forty and two months (3.5 years).

Sabbath, the fourth commandment.

"A.D.400 –Persecution of Bible (seventh-day) Sabbath-keepers begins. A.D.450– Death Sentence for Sabbath-keepers." (The editor of "Harvestime Books", The Mark of the Beast, page 21).

This death decree left a trail of tens of thousands of martyrs. Before such Dark Ages there were true Sabbath keepers all over the world, but after the storm of persecution most Sabbath keepers were killed, and a few remained. The truth regarding God's true Sabbath commandment was covered up by the papacy, and almost lost forever.

"And it was given unto him [the beast] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them, and power was given Him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." (Revelation 13:7)

"From the birth of popery to the present time, it is estimated by careful and credible historians, that more than fifty million of the human family, have been

slaughtered for the crime of heresy by popish persecutors, - an average of more than 40,000 religious murders for every year of the existence of popery. Of course the average number of victims yearly, was vastly greater, during those gloomy ages when popery was in her glory and reigned despot of the world; and it has been much less since the power of the popes has diminished to tyrannize over the nations, and to compel the princes of the earth, by the terrors of excommunication, interdiction, and deposition, to butcher their heretical subjects." (John Dowling, The History of Romanism, pp.541-542)

"That the church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history... It is impossible to form a complete conception of the multitude of her victims, and it is quite certain that no powers of imagination can adequately realize their sufferings." (W.E.H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, vol.2, p.32, 1910 edition)

The scriptures prophesied how long this terrible persecution would continue, "and they (the saints of the most High) shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." (Daniel 7:25).

"We know that the year 538AD marked the beginning of the Roman bishops papal supremacy, when the last of three enemies were removed. In seven different places of the Bible, a time period of 1260 years is mentioned. Twice in the book of Daniel (the Old Testament) and five times in the Book of Revelation. It seems like God wants to make His children understand that here, something very important is being spoken of. The seven verses are; Daniel 7:25 and 12:7, and Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6-14, and 13:5. In these scriptures the period of time is described as both 3½ prophetic years, 42 months and 1260 days. There is no doubt that these seven verses are describing the same period of time. In most Bible translations the translators have made the comment that the expression, "time and times and the dividing of time" in Daniel 7:25 refers to one year, two years and half a year. This interpretation comes from the word, "times" having a dual grammatical form in the original text. This means, "two numbers". The expression, "times" therefore means, "two times". When a certain period of time is given, the word, "time" means, "year", the same way the word is used in other places in the Bible. The fact that the Bible regards a month as exactly 30 days, is proven for example in the story of the flood, where it is said that five

months is 150 days.

3½ years is the same as 42 months and 1260 days. Just as the whole of Daniel's vision in chapter 7 is symbolic, so is the time period. The Bible reveals the principle of interpreting time prophecies as, "one day for each year" (Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34).

The distinguishing mark revealed in Daniel 7:25 prophesies therefore that the antichrist was to have a time of supreme reign of 1260 years. So all we need to do is add 1260 years to the year 538AD, the beginning of the supreme power of the papacy. The prophecy brings us to the year 1798." ("While We Wait" (Norwegian Christian magazine), no. 20, page 27).

The beast receives a deadly wound.
Well, did anything happen to the papacy in 1798, which took away her political power to reign supreme? Revelation 13:3 describes it as a, "deadly wound", and in the very year of 1798, Napoleon sent General Berthier and his army to Rome, and Pope Pius VI was taken captive to France where he later died. From that time the papacy lost her political power, and her supreme reign came to an abrupt end. The result was that those countries, which had been subject to the tyranny of papal supremacy, were now free to rise from the suppression, opening the way for democracy in northern Europe.

"From A.D. 538, when the sword of Belisarius elevated Pope Vigilius as universal pontiff, to the time when the sword of Berthier thrust Pope Pius VI from office, in 1798, was exactly 1260 years." (The Editor of Harvestime Books, Mark of the Beast p.14, TN, USA, 1988)

The deadly wound is healed
But this was not the end of the little horn. The Bible continues to prophesy, "And I saw one of his heads (the beast's) as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13:3). Soon the prophecies of the Bible were again to be fulfilled.

In 1929 the papacy was given back the Vatican, which they lost under Napoleon,

The three previous presidents kneeling before the body of Pope John Paul II.

and they could once again declare themselves an independent state. “Even the world recognised the historic significance of this act. It’s result was to “heal a wound of 59 years,” according to The Catholic Advocate of Australia, April 18, 1929, p.16. The front page of the San Francisco Chronicle of February 12, 1929 carried pictures of Gasparri and Mussolini, signers of the concordat, with the headline, “Heal Wound of Many Years.” (Harvestime Books, 1988, USA, “The Mark of the Beast” Page 33)

The papacy had been healed. Not only did the wound of papal Rome heal, but the Bible prophesies that, “all the world wondered after the beast.” (Revelation 13:3). The world will support the Papacy and help her totally regain her power. The Revelation of Jesus Christ tells us directly who it really is that the world worships when they follow the beast, “And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast” (Revelation 13:4). As Paul said, “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan” (2 Thessalonians 2:9). “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

Perfect prophecies

We can see how the Bible foretold what was to happen, and how long it would

last. We have only taken some of the many prophecies in the Bible. These prophetic statements were written down hundreds of years before they actually happened. Even so, not one thing had changed, and all happened exactly the way the Bible foretold. As we see how perfectly the Bible has warned us through prophecy in times past, it is important that we take heed to the warnings that still remain future, for they too will surely be fulfilled just as accurately as were the others. We can therefore have faith in the things God has foretold about the last days before the Second Coming of Christ, and know for certainty it will all happen.

THE RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE OF BABYLON

The beast that rose up from the sea previously identified as the papacy, is called Babylon in the Book of Revelation. What does this name really mean? Today, Babylon is a pile of ruins just as God prophesied through Jeremiah (Jer 51:37). The remains of ancient Babylon are hardly a threat to anyone today.

If we are to understand why God calls the beast Babylon several times in the Book of Revelation, you first have to understand biblical terminology. In Romans 9:6-7 we can read, “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.” What Paul explains here Christ also explained when He conversed with the Scribes and Pharisees, “I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Christ saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham” (John 8: 37-39). It is not hard to understand what Paul and Christ are trying to say here. God looks on mans works, and from this He determines what family he belongs to.

So when God calls the beast coming out of the sea Babylon, it is because this power is similar to Babylon in it’s spirit, works and structure. The beasts in the

book of Daniel show us Babylon's successors until the end of time. The last transference of Babylon's spirit is to the Roman Empire, and then to the Little Horn which lasts until the end of time. How then does the papacy compare to Babylon? Let us first understand what the works of Babylon are.

God's people and the falling away.
The Creator, the God of the Bible, inspires the foundation for the majority of religions today. There are many different types of Jewish communities, and several different Muslim communities, as well as hundreds of different Christian denominations. Despite the fact that they all share the God of Abraham as their God, they all disagree over what He stands for and who His spokesmen are and are not.

So who is it that truly represents the Creator, and who are deceived? The dispute as to who is revealing the truth over God didn't start with Christ or Mohammed, or by the different church denominations, nor did it start among the different Jewish communities. By tracing back to how and when it all started it is easy to discover who is representing the truth today.

According to the Bible man was in close contact with a visible Lord. It is written that He came personally to converse with the first generation. There was harmony between God and man and therefore no reason to separate Himself from them.

After sin entered the world and man became rebellious against God's law, and against the law of nature, and grew evil toward one another, God sent a flood over the entire planet. Only one man and his family were saved by an ark that God commanded them to build.

All mankind came from this one family. Ever since Adam and Eve had sinned, a promise for a Substitute was given to mankind. As a reminder of this, they were given the sacrificial system. So it was Noah who must have known God's truth and been faithful and obedient to Him.

The story of the world's beginning, the flood and the Saviour to come, was therefore something Noah had taught his children and grandchildren. As God chose Noah, we can be sure that under him, the truth was pure and unadulterated at this early stage.

Noah's Ark landed in the land RRT, which is the Urartu area in eastern Turkey, translated as Ararat in most Bibles. According to the Bible the population started here. Archaeology agrees with the Bible, "It is well known that some of the world's oldest farming communities lie to the north of Babylonia, within the mountainous regions of Iran, Iraq, the Levant and Turkey". (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p.14) Precisely in the area south of Urartu (or Ararat).

All mankind came from Noah's family and the early generations knew about the flood. If the Bible tells the truth, Noah's experience should be widely acknowledged among communities around the world, and not just in the Middle East. "Knowledge of how the old world was destroyed in the flood with only a few people saved, is preserved in legends among various races in different parts of the world. In the Norwegian book, "De Flutsagen Ethnographisch Betrachtet" the author R. Andree mentions no less than 88 local versions of the story of the flood, from different races in different parts of the world, even the islands in the Pacific" (Alpha and Omega, vol. 1, p78).

Nimrod and his successors.

According to the Bible Noah lived for 350 years after the flood. He lived to see his grandchildren, his great grandchildren and his great, great grandchildren. One of Noah's grandchildren was called Nimrod who "began to be a mighty one in the earth". According to the Bible he built the first cities after the flood; Babel, Erech, Accad, Calneh, Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen. Some of them have been identified by archaeologists today, while others have not been found. Therefore we know that the first city of Babel was in the same area as the latter Babylon - the area of Mesopotamia.

Experts agree, "Mesopotamia, with its exceptional agricultural potential but its lack of natural resources, was a positive stimulus. Although certainly not the only one, towards the growth of the world's first cities" (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p14).

Several discoveries indicate that civilisation started in the same area as the Bible records. Archaeologists agree that the area between the two rivers (which the word Mesopotamia actually means) south of eastern Turkey is where writing was first created and put into use. "Writing was invented in Mesopotamia as a

method of book-keeping. The earliest texts known are lists of livestock and agricultural equipment. These come from the city of Uruk (Biblical Erech), from an archaeological stratum designated by the excavators as Uruk IV (c.3100 BC)" (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p.15)

"Ancient Mesopotamia was the home of some of the world's earliest cities, and the place where writing was invented. For these two major developments alone – urban society and literate society – it might justly be titled the 'cradle of civilisation', but in its literature, its religious philosophies and no less in its art it can also be placed firmly as the the direct ancestor of the Western world" (Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, An Illustrated Dictionary, Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, The British Museum Press, 1992, p.7).

Nimrod, Noah's grandchild, whom the Bible says built many of these cities, is described as "the mighty hunter before the Lord". The original Hebrew text here uses a word which literally means "in opposition to". "Arabic texts tell us that he claimed to have seen a golden crown in the sky and that he took it and put it on his head and then demanded to control this world in the name of the sun." (Babylon the Great Whore, by Torkild Terkelsen).

With Nimrod came the first great falling away from God's truth, even though he claimed to have been chosen by the gods. When the Tower of Babel was built, "...they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth." (Gen 11:4). The God of the Bible claims He did not approve of this movement, and to avoid the world's first centralisation of power, He confused their languages so that they could no longer work together and they dispersed around the world.

God had not crowned Nimrod and He never chose anyone to have soul dominion upon earth. It had not been given to any man to control the world as if he was God, or God's representative. God's plan was of a different nature, His work was not to be left to human hands.

Even so, the people of Mesopotamia and the surrounding nations, followed in the same footsteps as Nimrod, and copied his pattern of rule, by claiming that the gods had granted each king his kingship.

Assyrian seal showing a man worshipping in front of a tower. The sun symbol above represents the sun god.

The historical figure Sargon as many speculate, could have been Nimrod himself. The heiroglyph here shows Sargon's daughter, Enheduanna performing a religious ceremony in front of a tower.

"Later written sources tell us that all authority derived from the gods, and all individuals whom we would classify by their functions as "religious" or "secular" officials acted alike as the servants of their divine overlord." (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p.25)

Mesopotamia had the first state religion as there was no separation between religion and state. This method of rule was subsequently adopted by Babylon. Religion was completely merged with the instruments of power, law, and daily life.

The record of the flood and the man who survived it with his family was a famous historical document in Babylon. Several details from the biblical record of Noah's experience are also mentioned on these tablets found in northern Mesopotamia. One of these tablets can be seen in the British Museum in London today.

Even though archaeologists have not found Nimrod's true name in Mesopotamia, according to the Bible he was a leader at the birth of civilisation in Mesopotamia. Early sources reveal a little about how kingship was declared,
"According to Mesopotamian tradition, embodied in the Sumerian King-List, kingship descended from heavan after the legendary flood and was then held by a number of cities, each taking its turn as the seat of royal authority and, by implication, exercising hegemony over the whole country." (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p.27)

In other words, Nimrod and his successors claimed that the supreme God had entrusted them to reveal His will and to reveal the truth after the flood - that they were chosen of God and represented His will.

Archaeological discoveries to date, reveal that the Babylonian king Sargon had a grandchild called Naram-Sin who was one of the first who gave himself honour as if he was divine himself. "Naram-Sin adobted a style previously the exclusive prerogative of the gods. On his own inscriptions his name appears preceded by the determinative for "divinity", that is, the cuniform sign "god" normally written before the name of a god". The language in texts dedicated to him is even less reserved, and in these his "servants" address him not merely as divine but literally as 'god of Agade'." (Joan Oates, Babylon, From Sargon to Hammurapi, Thames and Hudson, p.41)

Ancient illustrations of Naran-Sin, show him wearing a two horned helmet which subsequently became a symbol of lower ranking gods, for example, "God's companion" (Ibid p41). Even though the different emperors throughout time did not always exalt themselves in the same manner, they all claimed to be God's representative. But according to the Bible, God had not chosen these people, but choose a simple man who lived in Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2) as he had remained faithful to God's truth despite being surrounded by apostasy. God did not chose him as His substitute or as a world ruler. The man God chose was called Abram, who was later renamed Abraham. God asked Abraham to leave the area of Mesopotamia and travel to a country God would give to him and his ancestors.

The whole world adopted the Babylonian view of God and their mythological version of the fall of man and the war in heaven. So God wanted to choose a

people to preserve His truth. But God would still allow the lies to spread among those who did not love the truth. Abraham was to inherit a country where his future generations could be a light in the dark. God renewed His promise of a Saviour to come from the seed of Abraham, the same promise that was given to Adam.

Having faith in God's promises, Abraham left his friends and family and journeyed from his home town Ur, in Mesopotamia, towards Canaan (which is now Israel).

There were now two great contrasts; Abraham and the exalted kings of Mesopotamia, both who claimed to represent the same God; He who created the Earth and later allowed a world wide flood. Who was telling the truth?

Even though the easiest choice in the time of Abraham would be to believe and follow the grand kings of Mesopotamia rather than a simple nomad, today it is commonly understood who God really chose. The Bible prophesied of Babylon, "And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant" (Jer 51:37). The passing of time determined that the God of Noah was now with Abraham, and not with Nimrod and his successors. Therefore we can see that the God of Abraham and His holy Bible is a guide-line as to who God is with and what is His will.

It is important to remember that when the languages were confused, the name of God also took on many different pronounciations. The same happened to the name of Noah and his family. The promise given to Noah of a Saviour was well known. Time after time various men claimed to be that Saviour who was to be born of a virgin. A star sign has been named after the virgin which was originally a woman with a branch in her hand. It was common then to sculpture statues of a woman with a child. The woman was worshipped as divine and usually called the "Queen of Heaven" (Jer 44:17).

In addition to worshipping the Queen of Heaven the characters of good and evil angels from the war in heaven were made mytholigical and were spoken of as gods. As God had not revealed every detail of the war in heaven (which later spread to earth), speculation and myth crept in due to man's constant desire to explain everything at all times.

Myths were also fabricated to strengthen the position and power of kings. Fanciful stories inspired a new direction in worship. Some of these myths are found in tablets from Mesopotamia and contain a mixture of elements found in the Bible, with elements that contradict the Bible. For example, the Babylonian ruler Gilgamesh records how he travelled to see the man who had survived the flood, while he adds to the story that Ishtaar (the Babylonian goddess) made advances towards him, and other stories of his dangerous journey to visit the man we know as Noah (Mesopotamian Myths, the British Museum Press).

One of the reasons that you can safely assert that the Babylonian myths cannot be true is that they often contradict each other. "As might be expected from such a broad field, they display very considerable variety, and in many cases there are several different versions of a narrative, originating from different localities or in different periods, some of which directly contradict other versions." (Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, The British Museum Press, 1992, p.14)

Not surprisingly, the same concept is used today. A true story is only based on the actual event. Artistic license allows ample room to add or take away finer details from the actual event. Hollywood has produced movies about a historic event, but have added themes, characters, dialogue etc. that they never claim to be historically accurate. It is simply understood by the audience that the movie is *based* on a true story.

To create stories has always been man's passion. We have fictitious novels and movies, and people act out stories based around history with authentic place names and historical events. Many authors thoroughly study the time period to authenticate the setting of their fiction. Details of the food they ate, the clothes they wore, how they laboured and the political climate is incorporated into the fictitious story. The more realistic the story is and the more facts used, the more praise and recognition the movie or novel gets.

This happens today and has happened in times past. Not only in Mesopotamia, but the Greeks loved theatre and mythology based on their gods. The Egyptian empire and the Roman empire, in South America and in Asia, the same is found throughout the ancient world. When man was separated after the Tower of Babel, most people had an understanding of the war in heaven, the fall of man and the flood, but when writing about these events, they added to their stories

according to their own traditions.

This also happened after the time of Christ. For many years the Bible was known as the book which testified to the life of Christ, but today certain denominations have added to the story, based on their own understanding. Some claim that Christ went to America to minister to the native Americans after He died on the cross, others have created myths about Christ going to hell, where as well as dying for man, He also suffered in hell for us. Few have acknowledged what the Bible actually says Christ really did after His resurrection; He became our High Priest in the sanctuary in heaven.

When we dig for truth amongst an array of claims and counter-claims, we need to understand that some writers have added fiction to fact. The kings of Babylon who claimed they were God's chosen ones, continued to create myths that exalted their kingdom. They created temples, and images and statues of mythological and divine figures. They fabricated religious ceremonies and rituals. When the God of the Bible is angered at Babylon, He is also angered at the tremendous corruption that has infiltrated God's truth. They also initiated "the way of the heathen", which in many ways was the total opposite of what God stood for and wanted for His people.

Babylon was not a lawless society. The discovery of the law of Hammurabi reveals to us the laws of Babylon. The law proclaims punishment for various social crimes. One of the first laws found by archaeologists is from Ur-Nammu, also in Mesopotamia.

The forerunner to money also originated in Mesopotamia, "silver served too as a medium of account, thus already fulfilling all the classical functions of money. Long lists of commodities valued in silver provide the earliest 'price index' for the staples of Mesopotamian life" (Joan Oates, Babylon, From Sargon to Hammurapi, Thames and Hudson, p.44-45)

Babylon also had public schools, restaurants, and controlled trade. They had laws for equality between men and women, and they imposed fines for petty crimes and several other concepts that we practice today (Ibid p45).

The Centre of the Old World

Although it enjoyed rich farmland, the land between "the two rivers" or Mes-

opotamia, was a country with few resources. This is why Babylon was so dependent on trading with other countries. “Babylonia, though potentially rich in agricultural products, lacked such essential commodities as stone, timber and metal ores... For this reason trade was of crucial importance, and at an early period an extensive network of routes grew up linking Babylonia with the rest of the Near East.” (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, Introduction p.11)

Not only due to their dependence on trade, but also because their land was in the middle from where man spread eastward and westward, “Not only did Babylon lie within that small area of Mesopotamia where its two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, approach most closely to each other, but its situation at the notheren end of the alluvial plain gave it potential control of two of the most famous roads in the ancient world... The advantages of this situation, both commercial and military, were fully appreciated and exploited by a succession of Mesopotamian dynasties and undoubtedly dictated the establishment, within 80 km of one another, of ‘the most remarkable sequence of historic capitals in the world’.” (Ibid, p.10)

Controlling the most strategic areas in ancient times and due to their trade with other countries, Mesopotamia ended up having strong influences upon all of civilisation at that time. It was for this reason, as well as the dispersion from the Tower of Babel, that Babylonian mythology spread far and wide and was adopted throughout the entire Middle East, and from there to European countries.

“Later and almost certainly apocryphal tradition attributes to Babylon an early importance as a religious centre.” (Joan Oates, The Old Babylonian Period, Thames and Hudson, p.60)

“Perhaps the most important role of the Hurrians in the story of Babylon lies in the part they played as intermediaries in the transmission of Babylonian culture to the Hittites, to the Palestinians and Phoenicians, and indirectly, to Greece and the western world.” (Ibid, p.87)

“Yet the Kassites ruled a unified Babylonia far longer than any other Mesopotamian dynasty, and the emergence of Babylon as the political and cultural centre of the ancient world took place under their aegis” (Ibid, p.101).

"At its greatest extent, the influence of Mesopotamian civilisation could be felt as far away as modern Iran, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, Turkey, Cyprus and Greece; there were also commercial connections with the Indus Valley (Pakistan)." (Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, The British Museum Press, 1992 p.11).

Israel

Abraham had received God's promises and moved from Mesopotamia, where according to the Bible, his entire family had been influenced by pagan worship. The land that God had promised him was not actually claimed until several generations later. The delay occurred because God wanted to grant the native population as much time as possible to turn back from their apostasy and their wicked way of life. Eventually though, Abraham and his sons Isaac and Jacob, lived with their families in the land they had been promised as witnesses to the inhabitants. But the people continued to practice their idolatrous worship, inspired by Mesopotamia, which included violent, sexual rituals and child sacrifices to the gods.

Due to famine in the land, Abraham's descendants moved to Egypt where they ended up as slaves under Pharaoh. God finally led them from Egypt back to Canaan (the land Abraham had been promised) because the time of probation for the inhabitants of Canaan was over.

Israel conquered the country after receiving God's moral, ceremonial and judicial laws. God chose Abraham and not the king of Babylon to preserve the truth and reveal His character. The Ten Commandments were the moral law given to Israel at Mount Sinai, and were to separate God's truth from all the pagan religions. They were asked not to have other gods; there was only one God and He was the only One they were to worship. No queen of heaven, no prayers, and no sacrificing or worshipping the dead the way the pagans did. They were only to sacrifice, pray to and worship the true God.

The law was not new, God just confirmed it in writing. Abraham had kept God's commandments and had not prayed to any other gods; only the one true God. Another commandment God asked of them was to not make any graven images of anything in heaven, on earth or in the sea. Nor were they to even worship in front of images, "Take you therefore good heed to yourselves; for you saw no

manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spoke to you in Horeb out of the middle of the fire: Lest you corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female" (Deut 4:15-16).

This was difficult for Israel to understand and adjust to, as all people from all nations worshipped their gods before statues or images of their gods. But God had asked them not to make an image of Him or of anyone else, and not to worship in front of it. But Israel went through a falling away. The Bible tells us that they adopted Babylonian gods in the same way as the surrounding nations. Even the famous king Solomon built altars for the goddess of Astarte. Israel did not reject their belief in their God, but they rejected His commandments and added pagan practices to their worship. The first time they made an idolatrous image was the golden calf at Mount Sinai. They claimed that they had made an image of the true God, but God did not want them to do this as it would lead to mythology.

The God of the Bible says, "To whom will you liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he makes it a god: they fall down, yes, they worship. They bear him on the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he stands; from his place shall he not remove: yes, one shall cry to him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O you transgressors" (Isaiah 46:5-8).

He also said to them, "Hear you this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness" (Isaiah 48:1). Just as Babylon had claimed to serve the God who created Earth, fabricating their own version of truth and their own method of worship, so too did Israel when they claimed to serve God, but rejected His commandments and His will. God did not want to be worshipped falsely or be intermingled with mythological fables about a so-called queen of heaven, or any other god.

It was for this purpose that God had chosen Israel, so they could represent Him correctly and so He could give them a blessed, rich and full life.

Instead the idolatrous worship made them monstrous where they even sacrificed their infants, in the fire of Molech (a Babylonian god), as a pagan ritual.

Because Israel flirted with the religious mentality of Babylon, God allowed their temple to be destroyed, Jerusalem to be conquered, and the people to be taken away captive to the very place they idolised - Babylon. God gave them over to their seducers because of their unfaithfulness, yet He was still hoping to reach them while they were in exile. God wanted them to understand that He could not bless the path they had taken but He wanted to help them, and wanted to choose them again if they would only turn from their ways and seek Him. For seventy years they were in captivity in Babylon before they returned and started rebuilding the Temple and the city.

Even though Israel continued some of the pagan practices, their loss of freedom aroused an interest in their national identity. They remembered their days of freedom prior to when they copied the surrounding nations. They had preserved the books of the Bible that are now the Old Testament, and again sought to follow it as their guideline. All the in-fighting and their grievances with God were recorded. All the words God had spoken to guide them and show them the truth were opened before them, and the God of the Bible was in such contrast to the gods the pagans claimed were the creators. The first four commandments revealed the God of Israel, how He did and did not want to be worshipped. These commandments would expose who was truly serving Him and who corrupted His name with lies.

But the story does not end there. The Saviour, or Messiah that they had been promised was still to come from Abraham's lineage, in the days when Israel would be subject to the Roman Empire. As prophesied, the Saviour was also to be a blessing to the gentiles, hence the gospel was to be spread to the entire world - a world already deeply rooted in generations of Babylonian paganism.

Just as when Noah revealed truth to his descendants and subsequently falsehood emerged, the same would happen when Christ came to reveal truth concerning God. As the Son of God He was to represent God and portray Him to the world. However, as always, truth was threatened with lies, myths and fables. Christ warned against this and He and His disciples announced that there would be a falling away amongst the Christians, that there would be a false gospel, that false leaders would claim authority in His name, and even among themselves

men would rise up with false teaching and try and deceive them.

Even though Christ had chosen the Jews for generations with the true word of God and His law, there were no guarantees that they would not contaminate the truth of the gospel. So Christ appointed the Jews to spread the gospel to the gentiles, and while they were to tell people of the Saviour they were also to teach the heathen who God really is and how to worship Him correctly.

2000 years have passed and everything Christ and the disciples prophesied would happen amongst the faithful, has now happened. Today we have many different faiths, different teachings and we have to dig deep to find the truth.

The Bible warns us again against Babylon and asks those who want to serve Him to "come out of her". The Bible has already prophesied that Babylon would never be inhabited again. Indeed there is no one in literal Babylon today, so it must be referring to Babylon's religion, mentality and false teaching that has survived and deceived people for thousands of years. Now Babylon has again led the people of God (those that accepted the Messiah) into falsehood and deceit, which is why God pleaded for them to "come out of her". At one time God called Abraham to come out from the false teaching that had spread amongst Noah's descendants, later He called an entire people to leave, and now there is that calling to the Christians.

To understand what the false teaching of Babylon is, we need to go back to Babylon and take a closer look at it's religion and the nature of it's kingdom. Then we can discover if we have mixed Babylonian teaching with the truth and thereby misrepresented God to others - as well as ourselves.

The Religion of Babylon

Although not every detail has been discovered regarding Babylon, and there remain many anomalies in our understanding, several things have been made known. We also know the Greeks passed on, and even added to the myths of the Babylonian kings and gods.

Much of the Babylonian religion is familiar to us today, because Babylon has had an immense influence on many religious traditions to this very day. Surprisingly, it is neither atheism nor humanism that have absorbed the spirit of Babylon; it is in fact Christianity! Throughout the years the spirit of Babylon

has infiltrated generation after generation with its false understanding of God. Those who bore the torch of Babylon were the Greeks, and from them to the Romans, and from the Roman emperors to their successors, the papacy. The Roman Catholic Church carries the torch to this very day and is the world's largest congregation.

The Rulers of the Heathen

As we already mentioned, according to the Sumerian line of kings (one of the first dynasties in Babylon), the kings were considered specially chosen by the gods to be rulers on the earth after the flood. The kings were exalted, often as divine, and at other times as the earthly representative of the gods. The people knew that sin had entered the world and there had been a flood but they were then diverted away from the God of Noah. They added their own myths and fables, exalted man and claimed it was permitted to pray to other exalted characters.

The Mesopotamian kings did not just claim to be rulers over the people, but the entire world. Several of them titled themselves "king of the four quarters of the world". Among those who adopted such titles were Naram-Sin and Hummurapi. (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p35).

State and religion, priests and state representatives were merged together, where the divinely ordained king was also the high priest. This pagan structure was not only used in Mesopotamia, but in all countries that Babylon had inspired. This method of rule prevailed from the Egyptian Pharaohs to the nations of South America; in the Middle East and subsequently in the Roman empire. By calling themselves god's representatives on earth, they could authorise laws and dictate mans religious development, and all this while dominating the people with the strong arm of the law.

As with Babylon, the Roman empire was the epicenter of empirical power during its prime. The emperor was entitled "Supreme High Priest, PONTIFEX MAXIMUS, and The Spiritual Father of the People". As the emperor and supposedly God's chosen representative, it was he who decided what was holy or unholy, what was of God and what was not. "It must be understood that a public place can only become sacred if the emperor has dedicated it or has granted the power of dedicating it." (Roman Religion, Clifford Ando, 2003, p.247)

"The central question before us might seem to be one of power... who was a god, and who was not? Thus stated, the question seems to lead inexorably to an old-fashioned view of Roman religion as legalistic, as granting power to mortals to dictate to their gods" (Ibid p.8)

Religion was so inextricably linked to the emperor's power over people and the kingdom, that in Babylon the new kings (who conquered the land) converted to the Babylonian religion in order to be seen as God's representative and gain the loyalty of the people. Other kings in Babylon fabricated myths or took the name of former heroes, so they could be acknowledged as their successors. They became dependent upon convincing the people that they were ordained of God, as the means of retaining their throne (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p.86 & 103).

Equally, the Roman empire's political power was dependent upon her subjects religious convictions. When people became less religious, the situation became critical for the emperors. "Roman religion was in good health and held in high esteem to the extent that it was linked to politics and the political." (Roman Religion, Clifford Ando, 2003, p.118)

"There is certainly no question that myth was used for political ends, and that new myths were written in a political climate." (Ibid)

"This is why it is often tempting to treat the myth as a work of art sufficient in itself, a literary or figurative work... which refers to other myths, but not to the cult in anything more than an artificial manner" (Ibid, p.119, 120).

The Messiah whom God sent to teach the truth, made a comment regarding this heathen style of leadership. It was the Roman empire which ruled the Middle East where Christ was when He said to His disciples, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority on them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that does serve. For whether is greater, he that sits at meat, or he that serves? is not he that sits at meat? but I am among you as he that serves" (Luke 22:25-27).

Christ did not come to win man by glamour or by force. He came to tell the truth. In contrast to the heathen version of God, Christ came to show a com-

pletely different spirit, and He clearly showed His disciples that He expected them to continue to spread the gospel in the same manner. The Book of Matthew records Christ as saying, "You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority on them. But it shall not be so among you: but whoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:25-28). Christ's words were an indirect rebuke to the Roman structure, and all other nations who followed in the footsteps of Babylon.

Israel also had kings as did the heathen, but it was never God's plan for earthly kings to rule in God's stead. It was Israel themselves who asked to have a king. To Samuel, the last judge of Israel, they said, "Behold, you are old, and your sons walk not in your ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations". When Samuel heard this, he petitioned God as to what he should do, and he received this answer, "And the LORD said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you: for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, with which they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also to you. Now therefore listen to their voice: however, yet protest solemnly to them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them". Samuel then warns them against their decision to request a king like the heathen nations, "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, No; but we will have a king over us" (1 Samuel 8:5, 7-9, 19).

Most of the kings of Israel led Israel into apostasy with only a few kings seeking to do God's will. Christ prophesied of Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets, and stone them which are sent to you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is left to you desolate. For I say to you, You shall not see me from now on, till you shall say, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord" (Matt 23:37-39). Jerusalem was indeed subsequently conquered and left in ruins in 70AD by the Roman empire, and the Jewish nation lost their royal seat for ever.

PONTIFEX MAXIMUS:

“The dragon which gave power to the beast”.

The following Scripture is well known from the story of the birth of Messiah, “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed” (Luke 2:1).

Augustus was a name that the first emperor of the Roman empire chose, and the name can mean “exalted” or “worthy of honour” (Antikkens History, p197). Roman history began with kings (753 - 510BC), later becoming a republic and then a hegemonous power (510–146BC). Between 146 and 127BC it was still a republic but suffered from in-fighting. Then the reign of the emperors began in the year 27BC.

Initially the Roman empire did not seem to fit the description of the fourth beast of the Book of Daniel. Babylon, Media Persia and Greece had all been powerful kingdoms that covered vast regions of the world, but the Romans struggled with civil war and other political and social maladies. For a while it appeared as if the empire would not become the powerful kingdom it was prophesied to be, but when the emperor Augustus came to power it was the beginning of the acceleration to power for Rome. He was looked upon as a “saviour” for the Roman empire. For years people in Rome had dreamed of a kingdom of peace, “a glorious new age”, and in the year 17BC Augustus marked the beginning of

this kingdom of peace.

In the year 10BC Augustus used an obelisk for his sun dial. The opening ceremony was performed in honour of the sun god "Sol". On Augustus' birthday the shadow pointed to Ara Pacis (The Altar of Peace) and was a reminder that he was destined to rule over the Roman empire (The Age of Augustus, p144 & 167). Even though Augustus and his immediate successors experienced a very powerful empire, Rome did not experience peace for the remainder of its days. For "it came to pass in those days" that the Messiah was born and would in many ways shake the Roman empire, but more so after His death.

Augustus dressed as Pontifex

While Augustus and his successors were proud of their powerful kingdom, Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Emperor Augustus reigned for a long time, which strengthened his new directive and opened the way for his successors to follow in his footsteps.

Three coins from the era of Augustus with symbols of the priesthood Augur and Pont Max.

Augustus dressed as the Augur priest with the symbol of the priesthood in his hand.

Pontifex Maximus

Augustus continued many traditions that the early Roman leaders had kept and which future emperors also honour. When

the kings ruled the Roman empire they functioned as high priests. Like Julius Caesar before him, emperor Augustus proclaimed himself high priest over most of the religious priesthoods in Rome. Thus he became both a religious leader and a head of state, and the combination strengthened the emperors power for years to come. On the 6th March, 12BC he adopted the title "Pontifex Maximus" which declared him high priest over the Vesta nuns and various other orders (Roman Religion, Clifford Ando, 2003, p.66).

The Vesta temple lay in the heart of ancient Rome in remembrance of the place where young girls dedicated 30 years of their life to a vow of celibacy. The Bible never demands a reclusive, cloistered life, and later Christian monastic orders are inspired solely by the old pagan religious practices. This tradition was also found in Babylon where "Naditum" lived in a type of cloister that was linked to the sun god Shamash's temple. Celibacy was a requirement here too (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p.73).

Roman Pontiffs led the religious practices (that were not led by special priests for particular gods), and they also enforced religious law which affected the daily life of the people. They were also responsible for the calender. Originally there were three Pontiffs who were ruled by the Pontifex Maximus.

Augures

The emperor Augustus was also the leader of the exclusive priesthood of Augur. There were only a few of these priests and their task was to interpret omens, "They learned the will of the gods by studying the intestines of the sacrificed animals, how the birds flew and thunderstorms. If they received a bad omen they could interrupt official proceedings as well as revoke titles and offices" (Translated from "Antikkleksikonet", p45).

God, God's representative and Father.

The priesthoods that Augustus appointed himself to lead existed long before he came to power. By becoming a leader to all of Rome's priesthoods, he unified the kingdom under himself. In 2BC he was also given the title "Pater Patriae" which directly translated means, "The Father of the Land" (The Age of Augustus, p.129 & 214). He adopted from his neighboring countries, the pagan tradition to be called "the Son of God", "the Representative of God" or "God Himself". According to Augustus, a comet that appeared for seven nights in July of 44BC, was the sign from the late Julius Caesar (who adopted Augustus and

"The dragon which gave power to the beast". The pope received his power from Rome. Here is a Catholic staff shaped in the same way as Augur's. The end of the circle here is a dragon from the Catholic Churches relics.

Right: Catholic priest with the Augur sceptre.

who died that year) that he, Julius Caesar, should be made divine (apotheose). The comet was also interpreted as the beginning of a new age of joy. The star (called "Sidus Iulium") became the decor of coins and seals etc. as a symbol of hope. The divine Julius Caesar became a national cult, after which Augustus could declare himself "Divi Filius" or "the Son of God". Augustus was worshipped as a god after his death and temples and altars were built in dedication to him. (The Age of Augustus, p.222 (34)).

He was worshipped as a god while he was alive, but mostly by the Greeks, for the simple reason that it was more acceptable to worship emperors as gods and heroes in the Greek parts of the empire, than in the Roman (Ibid p.297). A poem written about Augustus in 23BC reads;
...praesens duvus habebitur
Augustus adiectis Britannis
imperio gravibusque Persis.

Which translates as: Augustus is to be viewed as God on Earth because he added the kingdom, "the Britons" and "DOUR PARTHIANS".

Even though Augustus was not worshipped directly as a god in all parts of the Roman empire, it was commonly believed that he was God's representative on earth (The Age of Augstus p.235), just as the Babylonians and Egyptians claimed.

In Babylon there were many different dynasties and to achieve the respect of the populace the new kings, regardless of their backgrounds, claimed to be chosen by the local gods. The tradition the emperor Augustus started was not new, but simply adopted from Babylon. The first Babylonian king that we know of who called himself god, was Ur-Nammu, and hymns were sung where he was exalted as a god (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p49).

Augustus dressed as Jupiter

From Hummurapis' law in Babylon. The sun god is sitting on the throne handing Hummurapis the king's sceptre to show the people that Hummurapis was appointed by the sun god himself. In this way his law was divinely ordained and considered the will of god.

Again in Egypt, "If they were not gods like Pharaoh in Egypt, at least they claimed to be born and nursed by a goddess and appointed them their position" (Antikkens Historie, p9).

Late, great heroes deified

The Roman empire continued to be governed according to the pagan model and deified her great heros after their deaths. Elaborate tombs glorified the dead rulers of Babylon, Rome and Egypt; in the step pyramid of Saqqura, the pyramids in Giza and other famous kings tombs. In Egypt it was common to build grand tombs in the form of temples that were also places to worship the dead.

Constantine

The Christians had suffered the most horrific persecution at the hand of the various Roman emperors. The Christian claimed there was one true God and that the gods of the heathen were in fact demons, and they refused to worship other gods. Despite the conflict and persecution, the Christians experienced a time of peace in the kingdom from 260AD until approximately 300AD. Emperor Gallienus ended the vicious tide of persecution that his predecessor Valerianus started. When the fires of persecution were again kindled against the Christians around 300AD by emperor Diocletianus, many were martyred, but the previous years of peace led to a massive growth in their numbers and Christianity spread out around the land. There were now Christians all over the kingdom and represented in all social levels. After the emperor Galerius' edict of tolerance in 311AD the Christians experienced a change of fortune after several hundred years of violent oppresion (Antikkens Historie, p.244-255).

The Roman emperors depended on people's religious faith to legitamise their power. So any religious disharmony was a threat the their very power. How could the emperor be the representative of God on earth, he who decided what was sacred and what was not, if half of the kingdom did not recognise his gods? So both Julius Caesar and Augustus fabricated myths to strengthen their position (Roman Religion, Clifford Ando, 2003, p.117).

Any emperor who bore the title Pontifex Maximus was high priest over all the different priesthoods thereby exploiting supreme power. As the Christian could not accept the gods of the Romans or the divinity of the emperor, nor did they accept the emperors religious authority, resulting in Christians becoming the

enemy of the state. When religion and state are so closely bound to one another then one cannot choose to obey the state without also serving their religion. As persucution slowed the Roman empire was split into two religious groups.

Previously, the Roman emperors had adopted one god after the other from areas they conquered to win the trust of the people. This made the Roman empire the mother church of all heathen religions in the empire. Now, if an emperor wanted to achieve a new era of greatness as a religious leader, and thereby win the support of all the people, he had to become high priest to the God of the Christians as well – either that, or rid Rome of the Christians altogether. Since the latter had been attempted in vain for so long, now that the Christians had grown to such vast numbers, it was natural to try to become the leader of the Christian religion.

Constantine dressed as Sol Invictus

Constantine became the emperor who did this very thing; claiming he had converted to Christianity. Earlier emperors claimed that a particular god had given them victory legitimising their claim as the chosen one. "After the tyrant Peisistratos had gained victory in battle by the Temple of Athena in 546BC he honoured the goddess in Athens... The battle at sea by Actium in 31BC where Augustus defeated Antonius and Cleopatra, was outside the Temple of Apollo and the victor was convinced that this god had helped him win the battle... Emperor Aurelianus won a great victory by the city of the sun gods in Emesa in Syria in 272. Afterwards he built a great temple for Sol as 'Lord of the Roman Empire in Rome'" (Translated from "Antikkens Historie" p.245).

Similarly, in 312AD the emperor Constantine claimed to have a vision where the Christian God promised him victory if he fought bearing His sign. Constantine won the battle and so began the exaltation of the Christian God by

Rome. Although Constantine was titled "The Great", and some churches made him a saint, he was anything but a saint to his closest family. "In 310, 325 and 326 he was behind the execution of some of his closest family, including his wife, his oldest son (Crispus), his father-in-law (Maximianus, who in 307 in Trier gave Constantine the title Augustus, and gave him his daughter to marry who was executed), and his brother-in-law" (Translated from "Kirke og Kultur", p.107, 2-00).

Constantine dressed as Sol Invictus

Constantine built 50 streets lined with pillars in Constantinople and a 50 metre high column was placed in the centre of the town. "The column is partly preserved and is called "The Burnt Column". On the top was a statue of Constantine made of light-reflecting bronze, facing east with a lance in his left hand, and in his right, a globe crowned by the goddess of victory "Victoria" - a symbol of world dominion. The head was surrounded by a crown of sunbeams. The supposedly Christian emperor dressed himself as the sun god only a few years after he led the bishops at the Council of Nicea" (Ibid).

Constantine also appears on his arch of triumph in Rome, with the mark of Sol the sun god. A gold medallion shows Constantine and Sol Invictus as twins, side-by-side (see image to the right). These things clearly show that although Constantine claimed to have converted to Christianity, he actually kept his faith in the Roman gods, especially the sun god Sol. His use of the goddess Victoria also confirms this. Thus his conversion was clearly not from a genuine desire to learn of God's truth and His will, but was from the same attitude that had always been a characteristic of his government.

When the Christians were no longer subjected to persecution, there arose disputation amongst them. Matters of doctrine and authority were greatly contested, so Constantine decided to unite the Christians by defining their faith for

them and removing some of the contested beliefs. Thus man sought to dictate truth to the Christian in the same way the emperors and the senate had previously done with the Roman religion. The nature of God and the term "the Trinity" was among those doctrines that were discussed and decided upon in these church meetings. Constantine did not just influence matters of doctrine but other concepts that were to continue to this very day.

In typical emperical style, Constantine made laws concerning religious holy days and holy places, but according to the Bible this right belongs only to God. However in Rome it had always been considered the emperors right to determine these religious practices. "Sacred places (sacra loca) are those that have been publicly dedicated, whether in the city or in the country. It must be understood that a public place can only become sacred if the emperor has dedicated it or has granted the power of dedicating it." (Roman Religion, Clifford Ando, 2003, p.247)

Constantine's actions as a self-proclaimed Christian were in harmony with the Roman religion but not the biblical religion. His mother Helena claimed to have received visions from the Christian God which in those days was the most common, heathen way to validate your word. Among the most famous "holy" places were Mount Sinai (which today is named after her vision), and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City. These holy sites were legitimised through Helena's visions, and temples and churches were built on the places she pointed out. Helena continued to appoint many new holy places which are used by the Catholic Church today. Interestingly enough, the vision of Mount Sinai in Egypt did not fit with the Bible's description for the location at all. This makes the vision, and indeed all of her visions, highly suspicious to say the least. Constantine also claimed to have found the apostle Peter's grave, and built a church with a monument marking the tomb.

Constantine also took the liberty of exalting Sunday, the weekly holy day that honoured the sun god Sol. By merging the Roman sun god Sol and the Christian Christ into one and the same person, the heathen holidays gained a new

impetus in this new amalgamation of religions. "Constantine's law sanctifying Sol's day, the 25th Decemeber (Natalis Solis Invicti), seemed to indicate that to him, Sol and Christ was one and the same deity" (Translated from "Kirke og Kultur", p108, 2-00). Constantine's intermingling of paganism and Christianity initiated a new era in Roman religion.

Coin that shows Constantine being caught up to heaven.

"At the end of the 4th century AD, a chapel with an altar was built by the pedestal under the The Burnt Column, where mass was celebrated, candles were lit, incense burnt, and prayers offered to Constantine's image atop the column... as if they were to God to protect them from accidents" (Translated from "Kirke og Kultur", p108, 2-00). One might rightly wonder how, for several hundreds of years, Christians suffered death rather than to pray at, or honour the altars dedicated to the gods and the emperors, but now willingly took part in this pagan practice just because Constantine claimed to be converted. A falling away from the apostolic faith had begun in more ways than one.

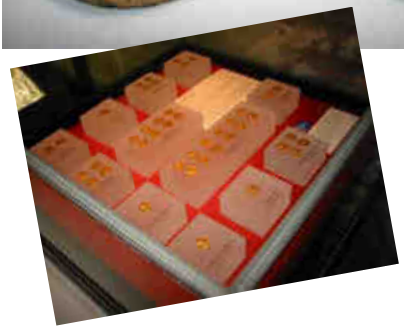
Today it is the popes who have adopted the name Pontifex Maximus, the name of the sun worshippers high priest. The pope here is John XXIII. The title Pontifex Maximus is on the right side of the coin. The sun symbol is seen on the hand.

The opening ceremony in Constantinople utilised the use of relics in true Roman tradition. It is also recorded that Constantine removed a statue of the goddess Athena from Rome and placed it under a column with a statue of him. He also gave Constantinople it's very own goddess which was named Anthousa (Ibid p.109). A coin from around the same time shows Constantine with his

sons, and a hand from heaven reaching down and crowning Constantine. This was a traditional pagan illustration of an emperor chosen of God. The only difference between him and his predecessors was that he claimed it was the Christian God that had crowned him and gave him power to reign in God's stead.

Constantine retained the title Pontifex Maximus, and "not since the days of

Pontifex Maximus was also the high priest of the Vesta nuns. The popes took upon themselves this priestly title. The papacy also continued the order of nuns despite the fact that this is a pagan custom.



To the left: Different Roman coins show several of the titles the pope inherited from the Roman emperors, like Pont Max, and Father of the People. These coins from the Roman empire can be seen today in the British Museum.

The popes are the successors to the Roman emperors. Pictured here with the title Pontifex Maximus below the statue from St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Nero had Rome experienced such self-glorification" (Ibid p.110). Last but not least Constantine designed a coin showing himself being caught up to heaven.

After the death of Constantine, his sons reigned and continued the new pagan/ Christian amalgamation. Pagan traditions, feast days and titles all remained the same, but were simply attributed to Christ. "In doctrinal questions, as with all others, no steady course was held. They received council from their subjects; letters and appeals from individuals, societies, policy makers, provinces and Christian political representatives etc. and they favoured those with the best arguments, the most appealing rhetoric, and those that flattered them the most" (Translated from "Antikkens Historie" p.247).

The pope takes the reigns

In the year 395 the kingdom was divided between the east and the west. The grand kingdom that emerged eastward, westward and northward, was then divided among various different Germanic tribes. In Rome a change in method of rule occurred. In the 6th century the pope, the so called "high priest" of the Christians, took the emperors seat and continued the tradition that had been continuing since the start of the Roman empire, hence, "the dragon... gave power to the beast". The pope entitled himself with all the same heathen priestly titles, Pontifex Maximus and Father of the People, and not only inherited the titles attributed to the emperors and the symbols of their power, but he actually inherited the full extent of their power as well.

The bishops and popes inherited the sceptre, or staff of Augur, the sign of the heathen king and high priest and the Romans understood and accepted the full implications of this. The popes did not inherit their sceptre from Peter. Peter himself was never authorised to either receive worship or to rule. The historic facts tell an unambiguos story - the popes received their power when the Roman empire fell, and adopted the emperors religopolitcal state, titles and spirit. For over a thousand years the papacy ruled and persecuted other religious communities and individuals; among them were Jews and any Christian communities that did not adhere to Catholicism. Millions of innocent lives still scar the conscience of the Catholic Church.

Christ called His followers to teach all nations, kindred, tongue and people about God. He had encouraged them not to rule as the heathen did, and that

none should seek to elevate themselves above another. Christ did not institute a kingdom inspired by paganism, nor did He prophesy that something like this would be instituted before the "New Earth".

When the Roman emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, the Christians had already started falling away, mixing pagan elements into their belief. Not long after the Roman empire began to fall, the kingdom was divided and the emperors disappeared. Christianity became the new state religion and the highest bishop in the Christian church was exalted to take the emperors place.

The popes exploited their religious power and the support of the people, to the same degree as the Roman emperors and the Babylonian kings. They claimed they were chosen of God, to be God's vicar, or representative. It was claimed that it was given them to decide who was holy and who was not, to dictate laws and traditions on God's behalf. They claimed they followed in the footsteps of the apostles, and especially Peter.

The Archbishop James Cardinal Gibbons, in his famous book in support of the Catholic Church wrote, "You cannot, therefor, be a true citizen of the Republic of the church so long as you spurn the legitimate supremacy of its Divinely constituted Chief. "He that is not with Me is against Me" says our Lord, "and he that gathered not with me scattereth." How can you be with Christ if you are against His Vicar?" (Faith of our Fathers, James Cardinal Gibbons, p.97). Such sayings and others similar to this have had a grip on millions inside the Catholic Church, but is what they are claiming really true?

If God viewed the appointing of a king in Israel as a rejection of Him as King, how does He feel about the pope? According to the Bible, Christ is the Head of the church, He who holds the key to life and death and who is the High Priest for His church (Rev 1:18, 1 Cor 1:17, 18 & Heb 3:1). The very same entitlement that the pope claims for himself.

All the same arguments that the heathen powers had used, are now used by the Catholic Church to legitimise their power as God's representative. The Pharaohs were long gone, the kings of Mesopotamia had stepped down, the Roman emperors were fallen, but their power structure continued from the fourth century AD until Napolean took the pope captive in 1798. Then in 1929 the papacy

regained their political power, and their power structure remains the same to this very day.

Babylon did not just claim they were chosen of God after the flood, but also that their kings lineage had continued from before the flood, right back to the very beginning. Equally, the Catholic Church today claims that Christ instituted their authority, and that the apostles (especially Peter) are part of their lineage.

As the Babylonian claim was a lie, it is natural to be suspicious of the popes titles and claims to leadership, as they are directly inspired by the Roman empire and not by the intentions of God. God did not call Abraham to walk in the footsteps of Babylon, nor did He call His disciples to walk in the footsteps of Rome. God had a different calling and a different plan and His point of view and will is clearly expressed through His communication with Israel, and Christ's communication with the disciples.

Another major point Christ puts forward, is that you are not chosen by God regardless of your behaviour. It has not been given to man to dictate to God. In His conversation with the Scribes this point was clearly made. They claimed the right to judge and to speak on God's behalf because their forefathers were once chosen. Christ destroyed this argument completely, "I know that you are Abraham's seed; but you seek to kill me, because my word has no place in you... They answered and said to him, Abraham is our father. Christ said to them, If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:37 & 39). John the Baptist who prepared the way for Christ, said the same, "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say to you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (Matthew 3:9).

Lineage or inheritence or the claim of God's approval means nothing. What matters in the biblical sense is if one does the will of God or not. It was by this principle that one could recognise God's true workers as oppose to the false. In Babylon archaeologists found laws that had many similarities with the laws that Israel received. In the Skoyen collection, there are inscriptions which show many commandments identical to some of the Ten Commandments. Babylon was anything but a lawless society and they had many laws to take care of the poor and the homeless. The Hammurapis code of law states, "That the strong

may not oppress the weak, to give justice to the orphan and the widow, I have inscribed my precious words on my steele and established it in Babylon before my statue called `King of Justice`." (Joan Oates, Babylon, Thames and Hudson, p.75).

The problem was not that they did not have laws, but that they did not have all of God's laws. They themselves chose what laws they wanted to keep and threw away what they did not like. The leaders dictated the will of God to the people, when actually God has His own will.

Similarly the Catholic Church has encouraged many good deeds and have kept many of the standards from the Bible, but as did Babylon, the Catholic Church added man-made laws and false theories. They have made several changes; rejecting some of God's commandments whilst adding hundreds of laws and rules that God never ordained, and are in many cases in direct opposition to God's commandments. The Catholic Church has claimed that many of the laws God ordained, for instance the health laws, are no longer valid because God does not want to put these burdens on people. At the same time they have fabricated many laws themselves which are ten times the burden of God's requirements.

The Catholic Church has theologically positioned themselves strongly against the Jews and claimed they have lost their position as God's chosen people because they failed to recognise Christ as Messiah. Yet when they themselves have fallen away in every conceivable way, they claim that their election stands sure regardless of what they do.

The traditional pagan way in which the pope continues to steer the Church is what Paul warned would happen among the apostate Christians, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess 2:3 & 4). We know that Paul does not talk of the Roman emperors, for they were already at work when he wrote this. He was talking to the Christians, warning of a Christian falling away, and the subsequent rise of a false leader who would try to control the Church.

The popes receive adoration and even worship in the same way the emperors and the kings before them. Herod also received such adoration but in this case God showed His displeasure immediately, “And on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne, and made an oration to them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost” (Acts 12:21-23).

When the children of Israel asked for a king, God said it was because they did not want Him to reign over them. God Himself wanted to be King for His people from His throne in heaven, and not have a royal mediator the way the heathens did. The very rejection of this godly principle, the ordination of a “father” in the Christian church, is apostacy. Any man claiming to be the voice of God but concurrently rejecting God’s word, and mixing the pure with the impure is a perfect copy of the spirit of Babylon.

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Top: Great reverence is shown to a statue claimed to be of Peter, but Peter himself refused to be treated with such reverence while he was alive. Top right: It was common for the people to kneel before the Roman emperors. Here from a Roman coin.

Bottom: From St Peter's Basilica. A man kneeling in front of the pope. "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25 & 26).

Not even angels are allowed to receive such adoration, "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then said he to me, See you do it not: for I am your fellow servant, and of your brothers the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (Rev 22:8 & 9).

The Roman emperors demanded that the people should kneel in front of them, but Diocletianus regarded himself too exalted to let himself be acknowledged in the senate; & contested that the senators, like the people, should in fact bow to him, as if he was divine. He sat in his palace as god would in his temple. When ever he might appear in public, he did so as if a god was revealing himself.

Top right and left: From Babylon people kneeling in front of the leader, “And he said to them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority on them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that does serve” (Luke 22:25 & 26).

The pope does the same in the Catholic Church.

All the pictures here are of the Catholic Church. The leaders follow in the footsteps of Babylon and Rome, receiving worship and veneration. Perhaps they forgot to read what the angel said to John, “worship God”.

“He that speaks of himself seeks his own glory: but he that seeks his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him” (John 7:18).

Everywhere in the Catholic Church you can see statues and pictures erected to revere previous popes. This statue of Pope John Paul II was erected while he was still alive. In St Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican, the church is filled with so many statues of men that they vastly supercede even Catholic statues of God.

Top: From Babylon. A high-ranking dignitary carried on a portable throne.

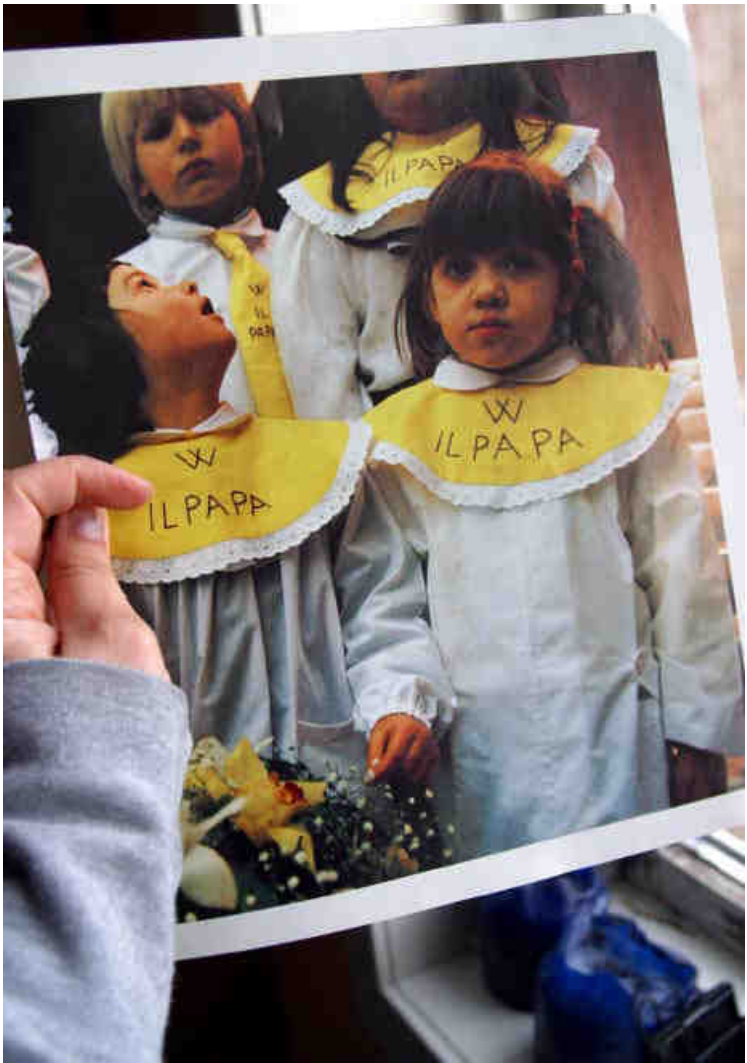
Right: A pope or bishop in a more modern sedia gestatoria and being venerated by the people.

Bottom: Statues of popes decorating the church.

“And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Matt 23:9).

When Christ spoke these words, the Jews were subject to emperors of Rome who called themselves Father of the People, a title the papacy inherited and is still used by the pope to this very day. In the picture below, Catholic girls are dressed to honour the pope. “Papa” (Father) is the Catholic title given to the pope. According to Christ Himself (the very One the pope claims to be representing) this is robbing God.

Christ also said “But whoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt 18:6).



Top: Constantine made Constantinople the capital after he declared himself a Christian, but archaeological findings show that he had not given up the Roman gods.
Top: A serpent column and an Egyption obelisk was erected as decoration by the hippodrome.

Left: Medusa was a guardian god whos image was placed in an aquaduct by the (supposedly) Christian emperor Justinian.

Left: Famous Roman gods decorate the summer palace used by both Constantine and Justinian. Here are the Roman gods Dionysis and Pan.

Top: The Greek and the Roman goddess Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty. She claimed to be of divine seamen and born from a shell. The shell was used to decorate temples among other places, as a symbol of this goddess.

Middle Left: Statue found in the ancient Greek city Ephesus of Aphrodite.

Botom Left: Aphrodite was also the goddess who was pictured with a son who's name was Eros.

Below Right: From the Catholic Church. A statue of a woman with the shell behind her head.

Bottom Right: The shell is decorated on the top of the columns of the most famous Catholic altar in St Peter's Basilica.

Left: Mary, combined with the traditions of the pagan goddesses is often pictured with a shell behind her head.
Bottom: The god Poseidon was shown with his head in a shell. Today the shell is also used above the heads of statues of popes.

This little chest is from the Christian era and has a Christian inscription. Today it is evidence of the mixture of Christianity and paganism. In addition to having a Christian cross and a Christian inscription it has a picture of Aphrodite in the shell, along with other pagan images.

This statue is of Christ and is found in a Catholic church in Rome. Here Christ is exalting the religious symbol of the goddess with His hand.

Pope honouring the shell and the goddess. The shell is on the clothing.

It is hard to tell the difference. To the left is a picture of the ceiling in the Vatican and on the right is an ancient Roman building.

Also in pagan religions in other countries, the shell was a religious symbol. Here it shows it placed behind the head of a divine being in an Indian temple.

Top Right: From a papal sarcophagus. The shell is depicted behind the pope's head.
Bottom Left: From an ancient Roman sarcophagus. The shell pictured behind the Roman emperor's head.

Medusa was a Greco-Roman female character of whom many myths are written. One of the myths claims Medusa was immortal and that she could turn anyone who looked at her to stone. The Medusa images were placed on important buildings to guard them. Another myth tells us that Medusa's lover chopped her head off after her death and brought her head to war.

Top: Medusa guarding the entrance to an important building in Ephesus.
Left: One of the inhabitants in Ephesus wearing the head of Medusa on his robe.
Right: The pillar with Medusa's head from Emperor Justinian's aquaduct. Justinian claimed to be a Christian, and was the same emperor who gave the decree to make Rome the Christian headquarters and the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) the Christian leader. Thus the pope gained power as universal leader.

Left: Medusa decorates the ceiling in the Vatican. On each side of Medusa is Eros, son of the goddess Aphrodite. On all images of Medusa (including the one in the Vatican) she has "curly hair" which according to mythology were serpents.

Left: Little boy-angel found in Babylon, from Pergamon museum.
Top Right: Eros was a beloved figure in Greek and Roman mythology. Here from Ephesus.

Right and Left: Eros was Aphrodite's son and often pictured with her.

Left: Two boy-angels, identical to Eros, holding up a cloth with the head of Christ in St Peter's Basilica.
Right: Eros has a new lady to adore.

From the Catholic Church in Poland: Eros crowning the virgin Mary, Eros holding the cross, from the Catholic Church.

The Greek mythological figure continued to be a beloved figure under the papacy.

Eros holding up the pope's emblem.

Right: Boy-angel under the papal crown.

This Catholic dish has drawings of Eros. In addition it shows a flute-playing satyr with the legs of a goat. In Greek mythology, these were demonic, heathen spirits. The Christian cross can be seen on top. The dish clearly shows how Rome first became the centre for the intermingling of Roman mythology and Christianity.

For a long time it could seem that the worship of Mithra would become Christianity's greatest competitor.

Top: A Mithra relief, typically with the moon god and sun god either side.
Left: An early Christian relief with the exact same image of the moon and sun god. This time with Christ in the middle. Does this really show a truly converted Church?

Left: Mithra's statue and altar from an old Mithra temple (in Rome). A Catholic Church was built over the Mithra temple, but these Mithraic religious symbols were never removed. The church is still in use today.

Before the pope's feet (this statue of a pope from St Peter's Basilica, Vatican) is a female statue with many similarities to the Greek goddess Athena. Wearing a helmet and the skin of a serpent with the mythological facial figure of Medusa on it. Athena along with the goddess Artemis were virgin goddesses.

Right: Athena in her robe, helmet and snake skin with the Medusa head (from Athens).
Near Right: Serpent skin on another statue of Athena (from Istanbul Museum).

Left: A satyr (Greco-Roman demon spirit). These spirits are often drawn with big ears.
Left 2: This figure is found in Babylon (Assyrian) but similar figures were also found in Egypt by the name of Bes. Identifying marks are; a protruding tongue and a beard. In paganism he was a mythical figure used to protect against evil spirits.
Left 3: This candlestick is among the Vatican holy relics. You can see above it the Greco-Roman heathen demon with his tongue protruding. Just below the mythical figure is the pope's emblem (papal crown and the papal keys).

Among the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, it was common for the emperor to dress in the attire of the gods. This showed which god they honoured in certain situations. On the picture you can see the demi-god Hercules in special attire. He is wearing the lion's head and cape, with the lion's legs wrapped around his chest.

Right: Alexander the Great dressed as Hercules with the traditional lion's cape. Alexander the Great and other Roman emperors also dressed in the attire of different gods. For example, statues of Augustus dressed as Jupiter.

The Vatican has not missed out on giving tribute to Hercules. In the front of this picture (in front of the pope's statue) is a woman dressed as Hercules, with the lion's head and legs.

This female statue, which can also be found in front of the pope in St Peter's Basilica in Rome, is holding the cross and has the sunburst from Helios the sun god (god of light).

The god Helios drives his four horses. Here he can be identified by his special sunburst (from Troy).

Left: This statue is from a Roman battle chariot from c500BC showing the god Helios (Sol).

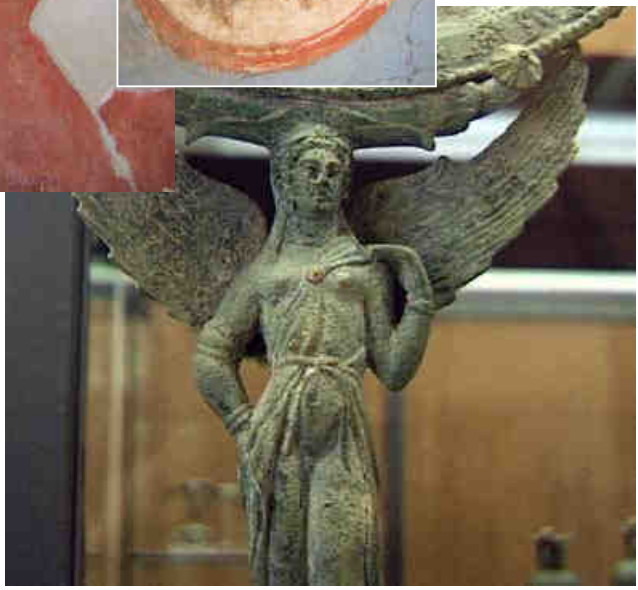
Top: Nike.
Left: From Ephesus. The goddess Nike was also known as Victoria, and was a famous symbol in many Roman cities. Here she is depicted with one breast visible while the other is covered. She has wings and a half revealing dress. The hair is also uniquely shaped.

Bottom: From the Vatican. Two “angels” in a copy of the goddess Victoria, on each side of a former pope. One of them holding up the emblem. Notice that the one breast is visible, the dress, the wings and the unique hair style are all identical to Victoria’s.

Left: Angelic figurines were used in Babylon as religious symbols.

It must be noted that angels were used as decoration in the Sanctuary for the Israelites, but the Bible describes angels as male. This does not necessarily mean there are no female angels, but it would mean that if it were so, then God chose not to reveal it. There is no biblical foundation for female angels, but they were popularly used in paganism. This because several of the mythological goddesses were angelic figures, like Kephalos and Victoria. In heathen religion, angelic figures were either women or young boys.

Left: Angels were favourite décor in the heathen Roman city Pompei that was destroyed by a volcano.
Below: Different female angel figurines. The ones at the bottum is from Rome BC.



Left: Greek vase with a young boy-angel.
Right: Young boy-angel from a Roman sarcophagus (from pagan Rome).

Left: Young boy-angels on the woven blanket in the Vatican, and as a statue in a Catholic Church in Rome.

Left: Female angel with Christ. Right: Female angels surrounding Mary and the baby Jesus. Bottom Left: Female angels below the Eucharist. Bottom Right: Female angels were used in pagan Rome as decoration, here holding up the torso of an emperor or dignitary.

The dove was a special symbol of several pagan goddesses. Here on Athena (in the hand and on the helmet), on the head of Victoria and the chest of the virgin Mary.

The pope carrying the dove on his chest. Even though the Bible describes the Holy Spirit as descending upon Christ as a dove, it is not described in that way as descending upon any human.

Left: The tradition of holding a globe goes far back. Here from a statue of the emperor Augustus dressed as Jupiter (Zeus). It is Jupiter's globe that he is holding (a staff which has been broken off) and as a symbol that Augustus is honouring Jupiter.

Right: Mary and the child Christ holding the globe together (from Rome).

Bottom Left: Has Jupiter's globe received a new owner or is Christ dressed as the Roman god? A statue of Christ holding the globe (from Paris).

Left: Old Greek statue from Pergamon.
Bottom: Same woman and same symbols now in St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

When God chose Israel they were not to make images of their God. While all the pagan religions plagurised each other's customs, Israel was to totally abstain from the use of such symbols. Today there is no great difference between the heathen religions and Christianity.
Left: Buddha figure from the British Museum. He holds the small globe. The other hand is formed in a special hand sign, with two fingers and the thumb raised.
Right: From the Catholic Church in Poland. Baby Jesus holding the globe in one hand and making the same hand sign with the other.

Left: The same statue of Christ with a close up of the hand sign.
Right: Both the beams and the hand sign are known within the religions of the east (British Museum).

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"Sebazios' hand". The bronze sculpture of a hand has the thumb and two fingers extended. Over the two fingers that are bent is the torso of Mercury, and the serpent is by the thumb. This hand sign belonged to the god Sabazios, a cult that enjoyed a popularity boost under the Roman empire. Sabazios was associated with both Zeus and Dionysis and it was claimed that this god sprung out from one or both of these gods. As can be seen here, this special hand sign is inextricably linked to pagan cults long before Christianity (Source and image: The Louvre Museum). No where in the Bible is such a symbol ever described or used in any way.

Left: From the British Musum. The hand from a statue of Apollo (Roman god).

Here is one of many symbols adopted by Catholicism. The bishop and pope in the pictures to the left can be seen using the same symbol (from Rome). The image of Christ at the bottom now resides in the British Muesum.

Left: Statue of Peter with keys. (from the Catholic Church). Right: The Roman god Pluto (god of hell). The symbolic keys are also used in other religions. Bottom Left: Catholics call them the keys of Peter, but when this symbol was adopted by Catholics it was already a symbol in pagan Rome.

All the popes claimed to have inherited "Peter's keys" which they claimed was proof they have the divine right to make changes to God's commandments and have authority as God's representive on earth. This doctrine is based solely on the following scripture: "And I say also to you, That you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt 16:18-19).

The word "Peter" means "stone", but the word for "rock" a mass of stone. The Bible preaches that Christ is the Rock. When Christ says, "on this rock..." He is talking about the truth Peter had just expressed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16). It was on this "Rock", this Truth, that Christ was to build His church. No where is Peter called the rock, the only One with title is Christ (Psalms 18:32, 62:1-3; Isaiah 26:4, 44:8; Matt 16:13-20; 1 Cor 3:11, 10:4; 1 Peter 2:4-6). It was true that Christ was the Messiah, He was the Keys given to the church and would give them access to the kingdom of heaven. Christ was the "Rock" which was smitten to allow people forgivness. The keys to life and death were never given to any mortal human being. They are in Christ's hands. In the Book of Revelation, Christ says, "I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for ever more, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev 1:18). "Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

PAGANISM IN A CHRISTIAN DISGUISE: Part 1

Sun Worship

When Christians increased in numbers, they experienced great persecution in Rome. The remains of the famous Colesseum still lie as a witness of the cruelties that once took place. The number of Christian's who ended their lives by being torn apart by lions, as entertainment in colesseums and arenas, total approximately 80 000!

The religion that was most common in Rome at that time, was sun worship. This, incidentally, was the most widespread heathen religion in the centuries before and after Christ. We still find different gods pertaining to this heathen religion in various places around the world. In the occult, the sun is a symbol of Lucifer or Satan. That is prob-

ably why it is no coincidence that sun worship was so widespread. In Egypt the sun god was named Ra, in Central-America we find the sun god Quetzalcoatl, the Persian sun god was Mithra, in Babylon they had Baal and the son Tammuz, and Apollo was the Greek sun god. These are just some of the many names the sun god had. Because of the close connection between sun worship and the luciferian religion, it is not hard to understand why God warned us about this kind of worship.

Let us travel even further back in time. God warned the Israelites against sun worship, "Lest ye corrupt yourselves… And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them" (Deuteronomy 4:16 & 19). Nevertheless this was exactly what the Israelites began doing not long after. The Israelites adopted the idolatrous worship that was going on all around them, and they worshipped, "Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven." (2 Kings 23:5).

In spite of the warning, they still took part in sun worship. In Ezekiel 8, we read, "He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? Even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? But turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations. And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say, the LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth. He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold,

at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east." They had turned their back to the Most Holy, where the law of God was, to worship the sun god, just as the law prohibited.

The origin of sun worship

Sun worship began in ancient Babylon and spread to the four corners of the world. In ancient Babylon, the sun, the moon and the stars were worshipped. The Babylonians believed the stars were their dead heros that had ascended to heaven and become gods. One of beliefs central to their religious ceremonies was the zodiac. A part of the Babylonian belief was that the serpents power was in the sun. The sun therefore became a symbol of the serpent (or the devil). The number allocated to the sun in pagan worship was 666.

The growth of sun worship

In Genesis 11 we read how God confused the people at the Tower of Babel and introduced different languages. As man dispersed they took the sun cult with them. As the languages changed, the sun god, the queen of heaven and the gods of the zodiac all received new names according to the various languages. Therefore today we can find rituals and religions throughout the world which have strong similarities with sun worship in ancient Babylon; from the indians of south America to the Middle East up to Asia. Among these is the Egyptian religion which has so many similarities it is practically a direct copy, and both the Greeks and the Romans copied the Egyptians. The Greeks are covered in great detail by the Greek historian Herodot.

In 133B.C. Babylonian sun worship was dedicated into Rome by Attalus III. There the symbold and ceremonies were woven into Cæcars cult and subsequently into Roman Catholicism. (The Great Controversy, Jim Arrabito (New Illustrated)).

Greeco-Egyptian statue of the goddess Isis, with a snake on her crown as well as on her head and in her hand.

From Babylon: The sun god sitting on the throne with his kingly regalia in his hand. King Hammurapi of Babylon (c1792 – 1750BC) is standing in front of the sun god and showing him honour. From Hammurapi's state law. The sun god Shamash was called The God of Justice (from The Louvre Museum, Paris).

Pergamon (referred to as the place where the throne of Satan is, in the Book of Revelation) was a famous place under the Roman empire and a centre for the worship of "The God of Healing". His symbol was a serpent entwined around a staff. In other words he had the "life-giver" by his side. His symbol is to this very day still used by, among others, the pharmaceutical companies and medical institutes.

From Egypt: The hand at the end of the sun burst gives out the ankh, the Egyptian sign for eternal life.

The serpent in the tree from Ephesus. Here the serpent symbolised life.

South America: The Aztec's made this illustration of a serpent in a tree. The serpent is entwined around the earth with it's four corners.

Among the native Americans the sun god was dressed in eagle feathers and came out of the serpents head. Also in this religion, the sun god was the life giver (from Louvre Museum, Paris).

The devil disguised as the serpent, promised Eve eternal life if she heeded his advice. The symbol of a serpent wrapped around a dead man was the word for 'eternity' in ancient Egyptian (British Museum).

Right: The two serpents biting their tails symbolises eternity (Louvre Museum, Paris).

Egyptian hieroglyph showing common head-dress for princes and pharaohs. The serpent is wrapped around the headband, with the head emerging from the top of the forehead.

The Hittite god Teshup carries head gear with a serpent emerging from the top of the hat and down to the forehead. The serpent has a halo behind it's head. This was a symbol of the serpents power and in Egypt the pharaohs also carried this symbol. The relief is found in the Gazi Antep Museum in Turkey.

Sun worship in the Christian church

How exactly did the Roman Catholic church appear on the world scene? From the time when the Christians suffered martyrdom until Rome became Christian, there were a number of changes. “Persecution ceased, and in its stead were substituted the dangerous allurements of temporal prosperity and worldly honour. Idolaters were led to receive a part of the Christian faith, while they rejected other essential truths. They professed to accept Jesus as the Son of God and to believe in His death and resurrection, but they had no conviction of sin and felt no need of repentance or of a change of heart. With some concessions on their part they proposed that Christians should make concessions, that all might unite on the platform of belief in Christ.

Now the church was in fearful peril. Prison, torture, fire, and sword were blessings in comparison with this. Some of the Christians stood firm, declaring that they could make no compromise. Others were in favour of yielding or modifying some features of their faith and uniting with those who had accepted a part of Christianity, urging that this might be the means of their full conversion. That was a time of deep anguish to the faithful followers of Christ. Under a cloak of pretended Christianity, Satan was insinuating himself into the church, to corrupt their faith and turn their minds from the word of truth.

Most of the Christians at last consented to lower their standard, and a union was formed between Christianity and paganism. Although the worshipers of idols professed to be converted, and united with the church, they still clung to their idolatry, only changing the objects of their worship to images of Jesus, and even of Mary and the saints. The foul leaven of idolatry, thus brought into the church, continued its baleful work. Unsound doctrines, superstitious rites, and idolatrous ceremonies were incorporated into her faith and worship. As the followers of Christ united with idolaters, the Christian religion became corrupted, and the church lost her purity and power. (E.G.White, The Great Controversy. p.42-43).

Sunday

The Persian sun god Mithra was one of the most influential forms of sun worship adopted by the Romans. This happened before Christianity reached Rome. The first day of the week, Sunday, was dedicated to the sun and Mithra, so Sunday received the title, “The Lord’s Day”, and, “The Day of the Sun” (Sun day).

Because of this, Sunday was acknowledged as the Sun's day, and was of special interest to sun worshippers. When Emperor Constantine realised that the gulf between Christians and sun worshippers weakened the country, he converted to Christianity, but also retained faith in his old religion, sun worship. In that way, he could present himself as a leader to the Christians aswell as the pagans. Constantine's motives for converting to Christianity were of a more political nature than a conviction of faith. Old Roman coins reveal that Constantine continued to worship the sun, as the coins are decorated with symbols of sun worship along with the Emperor.

Today, it is the popes that carry the name Pontifex Maximus. This was the name within sun worship for the head, or the sun god's representative on earth. This Roman coin, is only about 35 years old, and originates from Pope John XXIII. The title "Pontifex Maximus" is on the top right hand side of the coin.

"In the early part of the fourth century the emperor Constantine issued a decree making Sunday a public festival throughout the Roman Empire. The day of the sun was reverenced by his pagan subjects and was honoured by Christians; it was the emperor's policy to unite the conflicting interests of heathenism and Christianity. He was urged to do this by the bishops of the church, who, inspired by ambition and thirst for power, perceived that if the same day was observed by both Christians and heathen, it would promote the nominal acceptance of Christianity by pagans and thus advance the power and glory of the church. But while many God-fearing Christians were gradually led to regard Sunday as possessing a degree of sacredness, they still held the true Sabbath as the holy of the Lord and observed it in obedience to the fourth commandment.

The archdeceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the Christian world under his banner and to exercise his power through his

vicegerent, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ. Through half-converted pagans, ambitious prelates, and world-loving churchmen he accomplished his purpose. Vast councils were held from time to time, in which the dignitaries of the church were convened from all the world. In nearly every council the Sabbath which God had instituted was pressed down a little lower, while Sunday was correspondingly exalted. Thus the pagan festival came finally to be honoured as a divine institution, while the Bible Sabbath was pronounced a relic of Judaism, and its observers were declared to be accursed." (The Great Controversy page 53).

The first Sunday law was introduced by Emperor Constantine on the 7th day of March, 321 AD. "On the Venerable Day of the Sun ["venerabili die Solis" – the sacred day of the Sun] let the magistrates and people residing in the cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not suitable for grain-sowing or for vine-planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost. ("Codex Justinianus," lib.3, tit.12,3; trans. In Phillip Schaff, History of the Christian Church. Vol. 3 page 380.)

"This [Constantine's Sunday decree of March, 321] is the 'parent' Sunday law making it a day of rest and release from labour. For from that time to the present there have been decrees about the observance of Sunday which have profoundly influenced European and American society. When the Church became a part of State under the Christian emperors, Sunday observance was enforced by civil statutes, and later when the Empire was past, the Church in the hands of the papacy enforced it by ecclesiastical and also by civil enactments." (Walther W. Hyde, "Paganism to Christianity in the Roman Empire," 1946, p.261)

"Remains of the struggle are found in two institutions adopted from its rival by Christianity in the fourth century, the two Mithraic sacred days, December twenty-fifth, dies natalis solis, as the birthday of Jesus, and Sunday, 'the venerable day of the Sun,' as Constantine called it in his edict of 321." (Walter Woodburn Hyde, Paganism to Christianity in the Roman Empire, p. 60.)

"Constantine laboured at this time untiringly to unite the worshipers of the old and the new into one religion. All his laws and contrivances are lawful and peaceable means melt together a purified heathenism and a moderated Christi-

anity... Of all of his blending and melting together of Christianity and heathenism, none is more easy to see through than this making of his Sunday law: The Christians worshipped their Christ, the heathen their Sun-god... [so they now should be combined].” (H.G.Heggtveit, “Illustrated Church History,” 1895, p.202, No.ed.)

The Catholic church itself says, “You may read the Bible from Genesis to revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we (Catholics) never sanctify.” (James Cardinal Gibbons, The Faith of Our Fathers, p. 111, 16th ed., 1879.)

Gradually, force was used to further the agenda. Not only did they demand that Sunday should be kept holy, but everyone that kept God’s true Sabbath, should be stopped, and even persecuted. “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Revelation 12:17).
At a Church meeting held in Bergen, Norway, 22 August 1435, “It had come to the ears of the archbishop that people in different places of the kingdom had ventured the keeping holy of Saturday. It is strictly forbidden – it is stated – in the Church-Law, for any one to keep or to adobt holy days, outside of those which the pope, archbishop, or bishops appoint” (The History of the Norwegian Church under Catholicism, F. Keyser, Vol. 11, page 488, Oslo, 1858).

Norway, 1435 (Catholic provincial at Bergen), “We are informed that some people in different districts of the kingdom, have adopted and observed Saturday keeping. It is severely forbidden – in holy church canon – one and all to observe days excepting those which the holy Pope, archbishop, or the bishops command. Saturday-keeping must under no circumstances be permitted hereafter further than the church canon commands. Therefore, we counsel all the friends of God throughout all Norway who want to be obedient towards the holy church to let this evil of Saturday-keeping alone; and the rest we forbid under the penalty of severe church punishment to keep Saturday holy.” (The Catholic Main Seat in Bergen, Norway, volume 7, page 397).

Norway, 1436 (Church Conference at Oslo), “It is forbidden under the same penalty to keep Saturday holy by refraining from labour” (History of the Norwegian Church, page 401).

Remains of the city Laodicea (Asia minor, today Turkey). In 364AD church meetings that were held here became well known. In the church meetings it was declared that everyone who kept the biblical Sabbath should be condemned by law and ostracized. From this time onwards they were called Judaizers and we rarely hear any more about Sabbath keeping Christians in the Roman empire.

"About 590, Pope Gregory, in a letter to the Roman people, denounced as the prophets of Antichrist those who maintained that work ought not to be done on the seventh day." (James T. Riggold in the Law of Sunday, page 267).

"Gregory, bishop by the grace of God to his well-beloved sons, the Roman citizens: It has come to me that certain men of perverse spirit have disseminated among you things depraved and opposed to the holy faith, so that they forbid anything to be done on the day of the Sabbath. What shall I call them except preachers of antichrist?" (Epistles, book 13: epistle 1)

"Christians shall not Judaise and be idle on Saturday ["sabbato"], but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honour, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out ["anathema," – excommunicated] from Christ."

(Counsel of Laodicea, 337 AD, Canon 29, quoted in C.J. Hefeles book "A History of the Councils of the Church", vol. 2, page 316)

"The papal author, Bonacursus wrote the following against 'Pasagini': "Not a few, but many, know what are the errors of those who are called Pasagini... First, they teach that we should obey the Sabbath. Furthermore, to increase their terror, they condemn and reject all the church Fathers, and the whole Roman Church." (D'Achery, "Spicilegium," 1, f.211-214; Muratory, "Antiq.Med.Aevi," 5,f.152, Hahn, Volume 3 page 209; The Sabbath of Jesus Christ Through the Ages, J.F.Coltheart, Truth for Today, 1997).

"Robinson gives an account of some of the Waldenses of the Alps, who were called Sabbati, Sabbatati, Insabbatati, but more frequently Inzabbatati. 'One says they were so named from the Hebrew word sabbath because they kept the Saturday for the Lord's day." (General History of the Baptist Denomination, Volume II, page 413).

"To destroy completely these heretics (Waldenses, France) Pope Innocent III sent Dominican inquisitors into France, and also crusaders, promising "a plenary remission of all sins, to those who took on them the crusade ...against the Albigenses." (Catholic Encyclopaedia, Vol.XII, article. 'Raymond VI,' page 670).

In Spain: "Aphonse, King of Aragon, etc., to all archbishops, bishops and to all others.. We command you that heretics, to wit, Waldenses and Insabbathi, should be expelled away from the face of God and from all Catholics and ordered to depart from our kingdom." ("Marianae, Praefatio in Lucam Tudensem," found in "Macima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum," Volume 35, page 190)

"France - King Louis IX, 1329. Published the statute "Cupientes" in which he charges himself to clear southern France from heretics as the Sabbath-keepers were called." (The Sabbath of Jesus Christ Through the Ages, J.F.Coltheart, Truth for Today, 1997).

In France: "Thousands of God's people were tortured to death by the Inquisition, buried alive, burned to death, or hacked to pieces by the crusaders. While devastating the city of Biterre, the soldiers asked the Catholic leaders how

they should know who were heretics; Arnold, Abbot of Cisteaux, answered: "Slay them all, for the Lord knows who are His." (The Sabbath of Jesus Christ Through the Ages, J.F.Coltheart, Truth for Today, 1997; "History of the Inquisision," page 96).

"The inquisitors... [declare] that the sign of a Voudois, deemed worthy of death, was that he followed Christ and sought to obey the commandments of God." ("History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages," H.C. Lea, Vol.1).

The Catholic Church had succeeded in creating great confusion. Those who kept God's commandments were called evil, and even antichrist. On the other hand, those who broke God's commandments to keep the Pope's commandments, were called true Christians, but God's word tells us, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness;

Slowly but steadily, the fourth commandment was hidden away, and attempts were made to destroy it. Those who tried to keep the fourth commandment as the Bible instructed, from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, were branded, "servants of Satan" and, "SAntichrist". While those who intentionally broke the fourth commandment were declared to be servants of Christ. Black was made white, and white black.

that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

"For professing faith contrary to the teachings of the Church of Rome, history records the martyrdom of more than one hundred million people. A million Waldenses and Albigenses [Swiss and French Protestants] perished during a crusade proclaimed by Pope Innocent III in 1208. Beginning from the establishment of the Jesuits in 1540 to 1580, nine hundred thousand were destroyed. One hundred and fifty thousand perished by the Inquisition in thirty years. Within the space of thirty-eight years after the edict of Charles V against the Protestants, fifty thousand persons were hanged, beheaded, or burned alive for heresy. Eighteen thousand more perished during the administration of the Duke of Alva in five and a half years." (Brief Bible Readings page 16).

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." (Revelation 17:5-6). "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." (Revelation 16:6).

"In the centuries that followed, persecution against believers in the Bible Sabbath intensified until very few were left alive. When the Reformation began, the true Sabbath was almost unknown." (Editor of Harvestime Books "The Mark of the Beast".)

The fourth commandment was given as a memorial of the true Creator of all life. Concerning the Sabbath commandment, the Lord says, "And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God." (Ezekiel 20:20). During all this confusion, when the Israelites adopted sun worship, the Lord reminded them over and over again about this commandment. It was a sign that it was the true Creator they worshipped, He who created the earth in six days and rested the seventh, and not the sun god. Satan, who made it appear that the sun god was the creator and giver of life, had to remove this sign of worship. If he was to make man worship him, or the sun god as the creator, he had to remove the sign that identified the true Creator. That is why Sunday, the sun's day, was made a day of rest instead of God's Sabbath. Thus, all those who accepted this false day of rest, also accepted a new

law-giver and creator.

Satan had succeeded in infiltrating the Christian church with sun worship. He had succeeded in making them reject God's commandments and replacing them with his own counterfeit. Instead of keeping the Sabbath, that was a sign between the Creator and the created, Christians now kept Sunday, signifying the power of the sun god. The sign that identified the true Creator, had been replaced with the sign of the false creator. Furthermore there were few that were seeking the true God, thinking they already worshipped Him.

The foundation of Roman Catholicism

"On the one hand, the two religions [Mithraism and Christianity] in outlying regions of the Empire, long followed different lines of dispersion. Christianity from it's origin in the religion of Israel, spread at first among the cities on the Mediterranean, chiefly where there were colonies of Jews. On the other hand, outside Italy, Mithraism, which was propagated by soldiers and imperial officers, followed the line of the camps and centres of commerce chiefly along the great rivers of the northern frontier. Yet at Ostia and Rome and elsewhere, the two eastern religions must have been early brought face to face. In the syncretism of that age, the age of Gnosticism, rites and doctrines passed easily from one system to another. Mithra certainly absorbed much from kindred worships of Asia Minor, from Hellenic mysteries, and from Alexandrian philosophy. It is equally certain that the Church did not disdain a policy of accommodation, along with the consecration of altars of Christ in the old shrines of paganism. The Cult of local heroes was transferred to saints and martyrs. Converts found it hard to part with consecrated phrases and forms of devotion, and might address Jesus in epithets sacred to the Sun. Some Christians in the fifth century still saluted the rising sun with a prayer" (The Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, page 622, Samuel Dill, 1964, USA)

"The birthdays of Sol Invictus and of Mithra were celebrated on 25th December, close to the time of the winter solstice. In 353 or 354 CE Pope Liberius set his date as the Feast of the Nativity and a few years later he founded the Church of Santa Maria della Neva, now know as Santa Maria Maggiore, which become the centre of the Roman celebration of Christmas. The Nativity gradually absorbed or supplanted all the other solstice rites. Solar imagery came increasingly to be used to portray the risen Christ (who was also called Sol Invictus), and the

old solar disk that had once appeared behind the head of Asian rulers became the halo of Christian Saints. Excavation under Saint Peter's Basilica, undertaken in hope of finding the tomb of Peter, found a very early Christian mosaic that showed Christ driving a chariot, with rays above His head. [Common way to picture Mithra and Jupiter]". (The Encyclopaedia of Religion, Volume 14, Mircea Eliade, USA, 1997)

"Christianity came face to face with the Babylonian paganism in various forms that had been established in the Roman Empire. The early Christians refused to have anything to do with its customs and beliefs. Much persecution resulted. Many Christians were falsely accused, thrown to the lions, burned at the stake, and in other ways tortured and martyred. Then great changes began to be made. The emperor of Rome professed conversion to Christianity. Imperial orders went forth throughout the empire that persecutions should cease. Bishops were given high honours. The church began to receive worldly recognition and power. But for all of this, a great price had to be paid. Many compromises were made with paganism. Instead of the church being separate from the world, it became a part of this world system. The emperor showing favour, demanded a place of leadership in the church; for in paganism, emperors were believed to be gods. From here on, wholesale mixtures of paganism into Christianity were made, especially at Rome." (Babylon Mystery Religion, R.E. Woodrow, 1990 Edotion, USA)

"We know that Mithraism was a state-religion in Rome at the time the Christian church was established in this area. Certain rituals from this pagan religion, like keeping Sunday and the use of the round sun-cake in the Lord's Supper, was adopted by the church at this time. The Mithra-worship was strongly bonded to astrology and included the worship of the mystical sun god. We can, with certainty, assert that the pagan sun worship is the base for several of today's Christian customs." (Source unknown).

"From the forgoing, which treats merely of the more important solar festivals, it is clear that these products of paganism are as much in force at present from a symbolic point of view, as they ever were, and that Christianity countenances, and in many cases has actually adopted and practises, pagan rites whose heathen significance is merely lost sight of because attention is not called to the sources whence these rites have sprung. In short, Sun worship, symbolically speaking,

lies at the very heart of the great festivals which the Christian Church celebrates today, and these relics of heathen religion, through the medium of their sacred rites, curiously enough blended with practices and beliefs utterly antagonistic to the spirit that prompted them. The reason for the survival of many of the symbols of Sun worship and the practice of many customs peculiar to this ancient form of idolatry, lies in the fact that the early Christian teachers found the people so wedded to their old rites and usages, that it was in vain to hope for the complete abandonment of these long-cherished practices. Hence a compromise was wisely effected, and the old pagan customs were deprived of the idolatry that

Stillbilder av kolonn
som passer sammen
Kanskje noen av top
bit på den falske.

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Christ Himself said that He came to fulfill the law and the prophets. God's truth had been entrusted to the Jews, and Christ's mission was explained from these truths. When Christianity spread and became rich with influence, Christ was repositioned as the fulfillment of the doctrine and philosophy of the pagan gods, instead of the fulfillment of the law and the prophets given to the Jews. The result was that the image of Christ was destroyed and distorted. In addition they persecuted those who believed in the Messiah who was in harmony with the Old Jewish Testament.

DIAGRAM OF COLUMNS
Pagan doctrine and philosophy.
Fulfillment: Christ
Result: The truth corrupted.

The law and the prophets
Fulfillment: Christ

was so obnoxious to the Christian, and transferred as meaningless symbols and empty forms to the Christian festivals." (Sun Lore Of All Ages, William Tyler Olcott, 1914, page 248).

Sun worship under a new name

Sun worship is something that God detests according to the Bible. Sun worship in ancient Babylon was connected to astrology, and as mentioned earlier, the sun was a symbol of the serpent, the dragon, or Satan. The fact that sun worship is now practised in God's name, shows us how far Satan is willing to go in his battle against God.

Thousands of Catholic churches all over the world are decorated with symbols of the sun. One of the worst examples I've seen is in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. This is where the Catholic Church claims Jesus was crucified and buried. On the spot where they claim Jesus was crucified, they have erected an idol of Jesus with a sun burst around the whole layout. All those wanting to touch the "stone" that they claim the cross was placed in, must kneel down in front of the gold statue with the sun encompassing it. It is impossible to touch the rock without bowing down to the idol. Not only is this set up a direct violation of God's Ten Commandment law, but is also sun worship. It is not Jesus that is being honoured here. Thousands of Christians journey here year in and year out, believing that this is the place where Jesus was crucified. Thus the Catholic Church has succeeded in inviting thousands of people to kneel before an idol of the sun god, wh Although such people are ed ve

The Catholic Golgotha. As well as the figure of Jesus with the well known pagan sun burst about His head, there is a massive sun symbol around the entire layout.

The massive sun in the roof, over what the Catholics claim is Jesus' grave.

It is arranged so that in order to touch Golgotha, one has to kneel down, bowing before the sun.

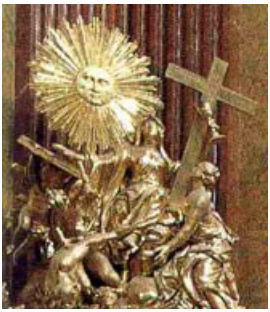
The sun has, in different religions, always represented the snake's power, for a life providing power, and for god. To the left: The sun hands out 'Life' (ankh) to the Egyptian ruler Akthnatan. To the right: The apostles. One sun-beam for each of them.

Worshiping the sun represents the pagan gods, therefore, God did not want these symbols in his temple. Today, it is one of the most well known symbols used in the Catholic Church. Pictures below: From various Catholic churches. The sun is often placed in a way so that if one prays in front of an altar, it's always in front of a symbol of the sun. Below to the right: Mary's name inside the sun. The sun is also the symbol for the queen of heaven (also in Babylon).

Above to the right: From St. Peters Basilica. The woman embraces the sun as if it were her child. To the right: One can see the sun on the chest (close to the heart) of this female figure in St. Peters Basilica.

To the left: The sun is engraved on the hand of this dead pope's ornament.

The pictures below: Symbols are treasured by the Catholic Church. To the right: The sun signs on each hand of the statue of a pope. Is it the work of the sun god they are performing?



Top two: From Babylon.

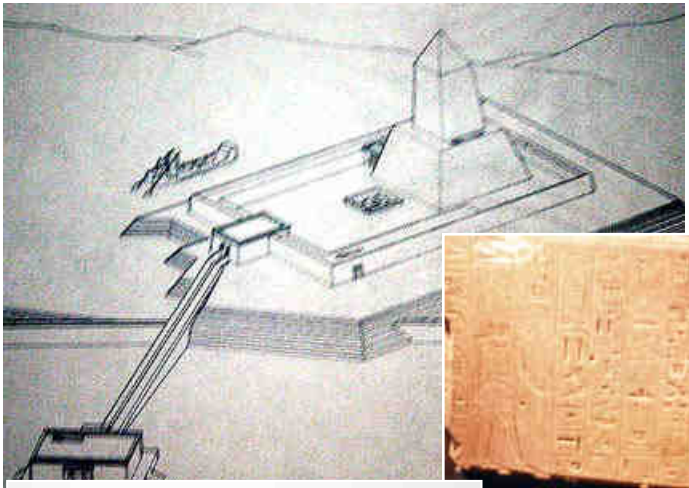
To the left: Jewellery from Babylon. Being a religious symbol, the sun was often illustrated in symbolic ways. Notice the two different types of rays drawn on the sun. A wavy one, and a straight one. This symbolises the masculine and the feminine.

Below: The Catholic Church has succeded in adopting this special Babylonian symbol as well. Notice the sun drawn with both straight and undulating rays.

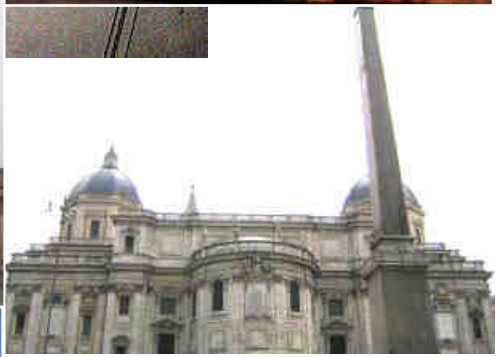
To the left: The double cross is also a symbol. It belongs to the sun god Shamash. Here it is placed at an altar in front of the sun god himself. (Babylon). By honoring the symbol for the god(s) one honors the god.

Below to the left: From the Maria church in Poland. The double cross is not uncommon in the Catholic Church. A straight cross with an undulating cross tipped over. In the picture we see the sun god Shamash's spe¨cial symbol with Mary in the middle. This is Babylonian culture and symbolism at it's finest.

Below: More sun symbols. The one to the left is from Babylon, the one to the right is from the Catholic Church.



Left: A drawing of the temple the Egyptians made for the sun god. The obelisk was a strong symbol. Below: Hieroglyphs next to obelisks.



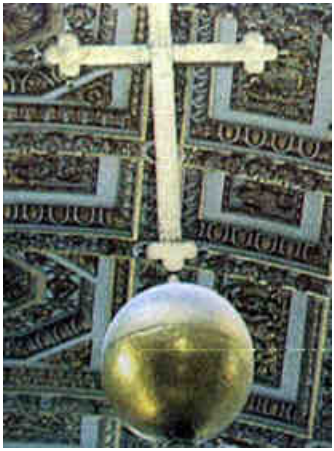
Above left: The obelisks at St. Peter's Square. They claim it is a witness of Peter's death, and that the cross they have placed on the top symbolises the victory of Christ. But the biblical instruction has never been to mix paganism with the truth. Everything from the pagan religions should be destroyed, not preserved, according to Bible history. The obelisk is also placed inside a solar-wheel, which is another symbol of the sun god, and in front of a church full of sun symbols. The two other pictures: The Catholic Church has placed obelisks in front of many of its churches, and places the cross on top as an excuse for decoration.

The obelisk at St. Peter's Basilica is not a copy of pagan obelisk, but is in fact an original. It was transported from Heliopolis in Egypt to the area where the Vatican is today c.37-41AD. It was not placed in the centre of St. Peter's Square until 1586; when Pope Sixtus V pronounced a death decree upon those responsible for any damage during its transportation. That is some 'Christian witness' in honour of Peter!

Left: From the Babylonian museum in Istanbul.

Above Right: From Egypt. This was a hieroglyph with many meanings. It was called Nefer & was a popular religious symbol in Egypt used for charms and necklaces.

The cross on the globe from the Catholic Churches.



The Israelites relinquished God numerous times but some of the kings demanded reformation. We are given details of how they rebelled, and how God's blessings were removed. Israel never actually ceased to worship the true God, their rebellion consisted of mixing true worship with paganism.

"Josiah then burned the chariots dedicated to the sun" (2 Kings 23:11-15)

3 pictures to the right: The sun wheel is a well known symbol with it's origin in Babylon.

Traditions were passed on from one kingdom to the next. Left: A solar wheel from Greek and Roman times. The snake symbol has also been included. (from Ephesus)

Left: The famous Egyptian zodiac from Dendera is illustrated inside a sun wheel.

To the right: The sun wheel is a part of all pagan cultures. This one is from the Karnask temple in India.

In the same way that all the other symbols were incorporated to the Catholic Church, this one was also included. The woman (to the right) holding the solar-wheel is from a church in Berlin. Below is the sun wheel at Notre Dame in Paris.

To the left we can find the sun wheel from ancient Babylon.

Above: Rather unsurprisingly, in the heart of the Vatican we find a massive solar wheel (the obelisk standing in the middle it).

Right: 'Mary' with the sun wheel.

The idol of the Babylonian goddess Isthar dressed in gold. Notice the crescent moon on her head which is a well known Babylonian symbol.

Top Right: A picture of Mary from the Catholic Church dressed in gold and pearls. Notice her crescent crown.

Above Left: The Hindu god Shiva with a crescent moon over her head.

Above: A Roman goddess with the crescent moon on her head.

Left: Roman representation of the moon god.

Almost every pagan religion has had a moon god/goddess in addition to the sun god. That is why the moon has been a common religious motif, like the sun.

Above Right & Left: The familiar Babylonian moon symbol.

To the left: The moon god holds the moon, from Asia.

Below: From ancient Rome.

Above Right: In the Catholic Church, once again it is Mary who now carries the symbol of the moon god/goddess. This is often defended with the book of Revelation's description of a woman giving birth to a Saviour. But through out the entire New Testament, the woman is a symbol of either a pure or an impure church. The entire book of Revelation consists of symbols, but certainly not in suggestion of idol worship!

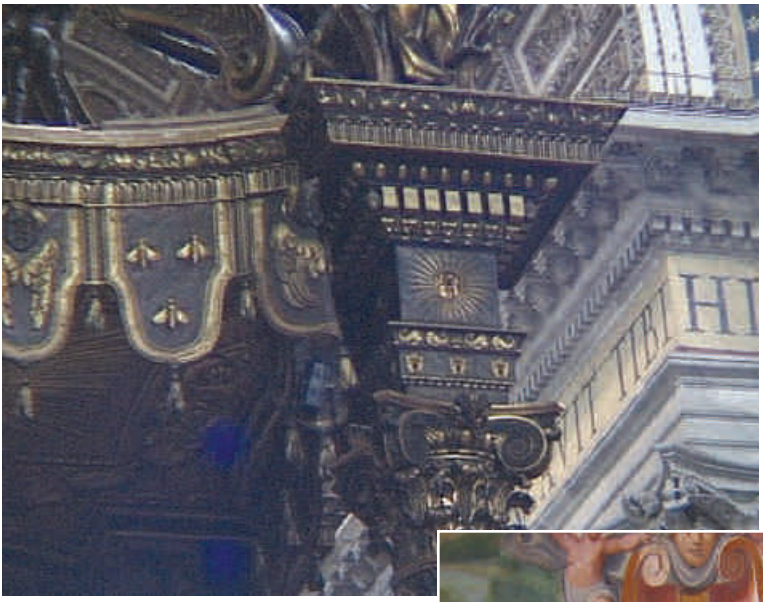
A third symbol of the moon used in Babylon was a crescent moon within a circle, often placed on a pole.

Below: The ornament on which the Catholic communion bread is displayed is designed like the sun. When Jesus instituted the communion, it is extremely unlikely that the bread looked like a small sun, as it does in the Catholic Church today. The little sun cake is in the crescent moon, making a perfect representation of a crescent moon in a circle. The communion in the Catholic Church consists also of ceremonies one can not find in the communion described in the Bible.

From Babylon: Three famous Babylonian religious symbols. The square cross which represented the sun god, the bee and the rosetta flower.

The bee continued to be a symbol of Babylon's followers all the way to Rome. To the left here you can see the bee on a Diana (pagan goddess) statue.

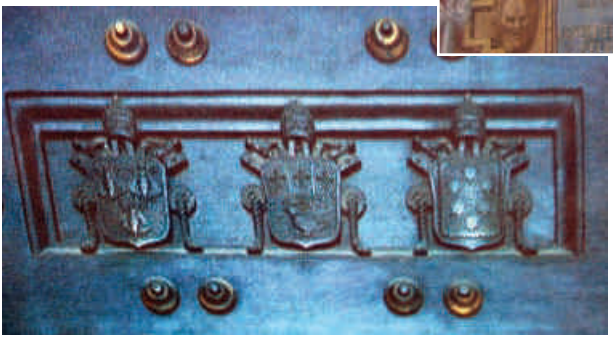
Below: The pope's emblem with three bees; the same Babylonian symbolism we see above.



The altar over “Peter’s grave” has symbols of the sun and the bee engraved on it.

Right: Woven carpet from the Vatican.

Below: The bee on “The Holy Door” to St. Peter’s Basilica.



Baal worship in Canaan was greatly inspired by Babylonian mythology.

Right: The solar-cross from Baal worship in Canaan. If the children of Israel copied Baal worship it is certain that they also plagiarised this symbol and made it a part of their rebellion.

God always asked the reformers of Israel to destroy all the symbols of paganism. Especially the sun symbols.

To the left: From Babylon. The kings carrying these solar-crosses were also high priests in the Babylonian religions. Below to the left you can see the pope wearing the symbol on his mitre and on his clothing.

Top: Catholic priests continuing in the Babylonian traditions, wearing the very same symbol around their necks.

The Aztek – Indians from south America also used the solar-cross as a symbol of the sun god.

Right: The cross displayed on their war costume. Left: On the shield and below around the neck.

The same Babylonian solar-cross from the Catholic Church. In this case with Mary portrayed in the middle.

The sun god's symbol is usually placed behind the head of Jesus. The artist is trying to convinve us it is Christ we are worshipping, but would the God of Israel agree?

Today one associates a halo with Christianity. This was an unknown phenomenon in Jewish teachings and the Bible. Christianity has adopted this tradition from many pagan religions from all over the world. The pictures above show how halos were used on ‘gods’ and deceased heros from all over the world.
Above Left: Buddha.
Above: The god Sekhmet in Egypt (with the face of a lion) and with the Hindus.

Above: Various Asian god-like figures with the halo.
Below: Mohammed and his followers with the halos around their heads.

Above: Halos, a well known symbol in Asia (From The British Museum)

Below Left: Also in the Roman Empire the halo was used on the ‘divine’. Here we have the god Eros as a child, sitting on the lap of the goddess Kepnaios. (From the 5th century B.C., Vatican Museum)

Below to the right: The serpent with a halo from the time of Emperor Augustus.

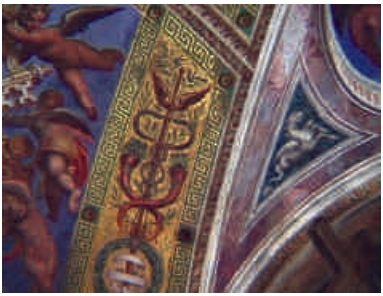
Above: This inscription from the 4th century B.C. shows Neptune, Sun & Aurora. Sun is here depicted with the sleek kind of halo. (Vatican Museum)
Far Right: Neptune with a halo. (Louvre Museum)

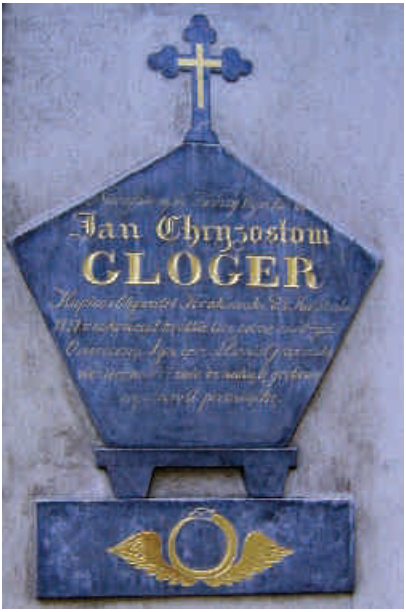
Above & Left: When the Catholic Church and the pope recived the scepter from the emperor, the Roman religious culture continued, just in the name of Christianity. Everything from Mary, & Jesus, to the saints are here depicted with halos.

At first glance it could be difficult to see the difference. The picture to the far left is from the Catholic Church in England and is supposed to be a saint. The picture to the near left is of Buddha. (From the National Museum of New Delhi)

Left: The god Anubis is dressed as Hermes (who leads dead souls to the underworld in Greek mythology). The staff he holds has wings and a serpent.

Below: Roman coin with the same symbol.
Below Left: From Ephesus.
Bottom Right: Wall decor in the Vatican.





Left: This Catholic church has chosen a symbol where the snake bites it's own tail, is shaped like a sun, & has wings. The winged serpent has always been a well known symbol among the pagan religions.

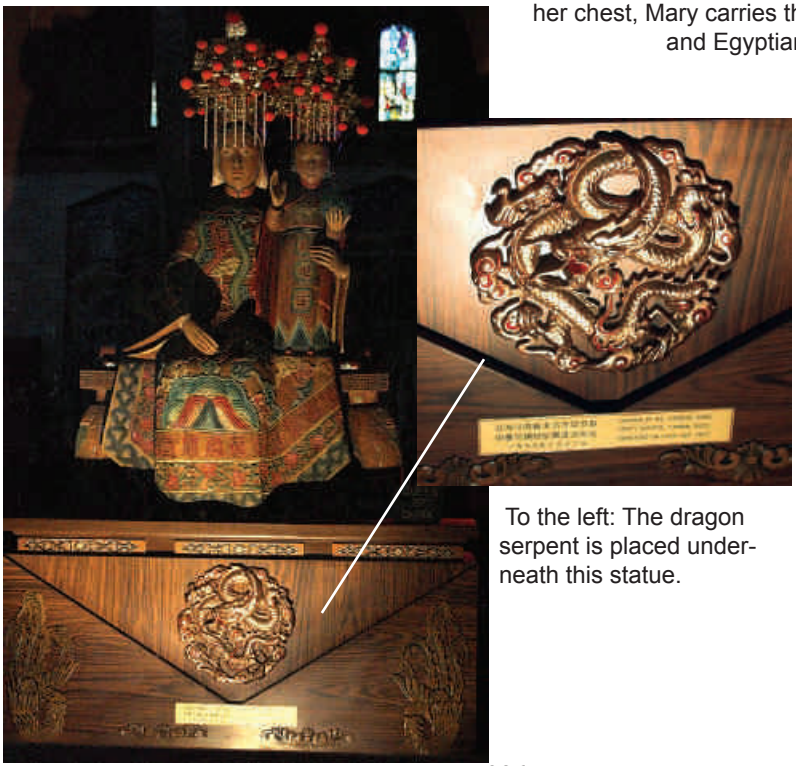
Top Right: The snake biting itself is a symbol of eternity. After Satan used the serpent to deceive man into sin, it is written that thereafter it had to crawl on its abdomen. The winged serpent therefore represents Satan's tool before the curse. In most pagan religions, the snake, the sun and the eagle's wings, were symbols of the sun god.

2 Pictures Below: From Babylon. The sun with eagle's wings.

Right: Triptolemos

Bottom Right: From the throne of the god Baccus.

Top: Mary and Jesus – statue from the Church of Mary in Nazareth. On her chest, Mary carries the Babylonian and Egyptian winged-sun.



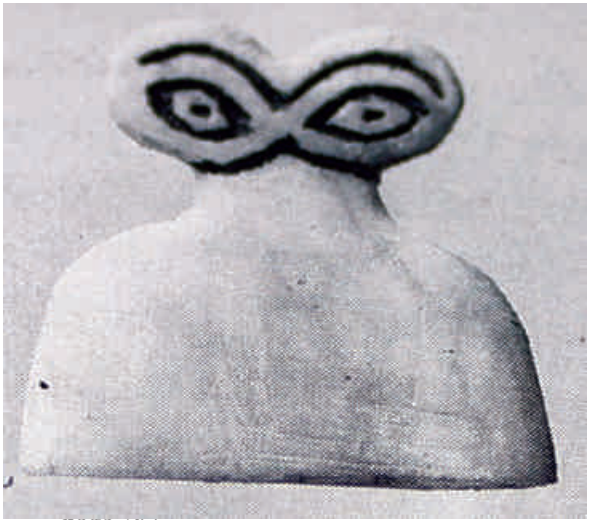
To the left: The dragon serpent is placed underneath this statue.

Above: The sun, the wings, and the snake around the sun.

Left: The snake with wings.

Above: The indians in South America depict the sun god coming out of the mouth of the snake. It has an eagle's feathers and the sun around it's neck.

The all-seeing eye is not a symbol from the Bible either. Most likely, it also has it's origin in Babylon, even though Egypt is known for the "Eye of god" as well. There is even a temple with several eyes in Tell Brak (east Syria). In ancient Mesopotamia (Babylon) the eye symbol was used on charms. Some archaeologists have linked the eye symbol to the mother goddess.



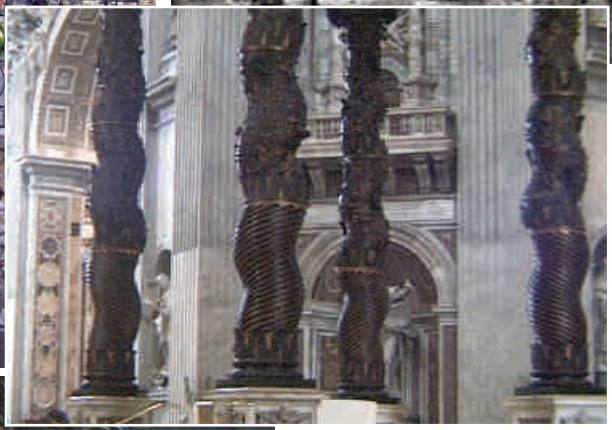
Top: The all-seeing eye became a popular symbol in the Catholic Church. Here we see it in the triangle, inside the sun. The triangle is also a very well known pagan symbol.

The eye is a well known Egyptian motif. Here it is displayed on each side of a sun.

The eye is usually placed inside a triangle, & just as often inside the sun in the Catholic Church.

Right: The ruins of Babylon have uncovered several of these rather unique spiral, 'serpent' columns.

Below: From the hippodrome in ancient Constantinople. This serpentine column once had a snake-head on top, thereby revealing what the column really represented.



Above: St. Peter's altar in St. Peter's Basilica. The Serpentine Column, or Spiral Column is regularly used by the Catholic Church.

Left: The altar for Mary, with spiral columns.

The Catholic Church uses elements from most pagan religions from all over the world. The rosary, or the prayer chain is not in any way biblical. It has been adopted from pagan idol religions.

Top Right: 'Mary and baby Jesus' distributes rosary beads to a nun and a priest.

Top Right: Baby Jesus depicted holding the rosary.

Left: The rosary is common in the Hindu religion as a symbol of divinity.

Bottom: The origin of the rosary is Babylon.

In ancient Babylon, crowns and hats were used ceremonially, & often symbolised supreme power (like that of the king). It is worth noting that the priests of the Bible wore a completley different sort of headgear. But the Bible never describes Jesus, Peter or the disiples with such headdress.

Far Left: From Babylon.

Near Left: 'St. Peter' from a Catholic church in Berlin.

Above: As we know, the pope wears a triple crown, symbolising their belief that they reign in heaven, upon earth and in hell.

Right: Babylonians also wore the three-horned crown.

Both Babylon and the Catholic Church have always used headdress to symbolise power and divinity, & undeniably there is a pagan hat that they both share; the Babylonian fish mitre.

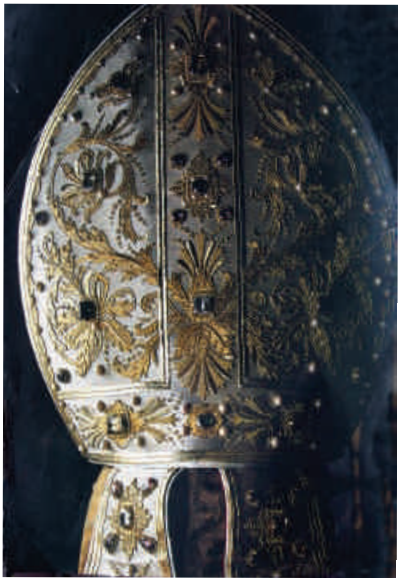
Above: From Babylon, now in the British Museum. The Babylonian fish suit was specifically worn by a priestly class assosiated with magic and mystery. Ancient literature shows these priests performing rituals over someone's sick bed.
Left: Deceasad pope wearing the fish hat.

Below Left: Catholic painting of the pope wearing the fish hat.
Below: The hats are still used even today.

The Catholic Church has adopted symbols, clothing, staffs, titles & even the hats of the pagan religions. Hardly a strict adherence to biblical standards!

Left: From the Catholic Church. Circular hat with two 'flaps' protruding from the back.

This hat was also used in Pergamon, where 'the throne of satan' once was (Rev 2:13). Is the pope a follower of Pergamon's throne?



Top Left: From Babylon. Fleur-de-lys was always a Babylonian symbol often used on the Babylonian cherubs.

Top Right: Statue with this special symbol displayed on the head of the the Egyptian goddess Isis.

Above Left: Mary and baby Jesus decorated with the symbol.

Left & Below: The symbol is commonly used in the Catholic Church.

PAGANISM IN A CHRISTIAN DISGUISE: PART 2

25th of December

Today, it is Christ's birth that is celebrated on December 25th, established by the Roman Catholic Church. But was Jesus really born on the 25th of December, or does this public holiday also belong to the sun god? In Babylon, the god Tammuz was worshipped in the form of a child, "Born on December 25th, he represented the rebirth of the sun. As the pagan god-child, he was called "Baal-berith," or lord of the fir-tree. The word "yule" is a Babylonian word for infant. The pagan Anglo-Saxons called December 25th, Yule day. Both the Egyptians and Persians celebrated the birthday of their god on December 25th. Other names applied to the sun-god as a child are: Mithra, Horus, Isvara, Deoius, Jupiter, Plutus, Ninus, Osiris, Dionysus, Bacchus, Iacchus, Adonis, Attis, etc. All mythology involving child worship is a reflection of ancient Babylonian customs". (The Great Controversy, Ellen White, from the new illustrated section by Jim Arrabito, Laymen For Religious Liberty, 1990, Florida, USA).

"There is no logical reason to giving the name, "Yule-day" (Christmas) to a holiday commemorating Jesus' birthday, as this word is the Chaldean or Babylonian word for "infant" or "little child". It is referring to Tammuz, the incarnation of the sun god, who was born on the winter solstice. The 25th of December was Tammuz's birthday. We call this day, "Yule-day" (Christmas day) after inheriting it from the Anglo-Saxons. Several centuries before Jesus was born, this

day was celebrated as the birth of the sun god accross the entire world, in Babylon (Tammuz), Persia (Mithra), Egypt (Horus), Greece (Dionysus), Scandinavia (Balder) etc. In sun worship, (which in the Roman Empire was declared the state religion around the year 270), the 25th of December was celebrated as the birthday of the sun with grand celebrations and games. The first Christians kept away from this pagan feast day. It was not until the middle of the fourth century, that the day was first celebrated in Rome as the birthday of Jesus. (Just as with the adoption of pagan idol worship into the Christian church, these holidays maintained their practice and meaning, but merely underwent a name change).

Two great festivals were of particular importance within sun worship. That was the summer and winter solstice, both times of the year when the sun is farthest from the equator. The midsummer festival, that was celebrated on the 24th of June (the longest day of the year), was kept to honour the sun on the day which it had "it's full maturity". The dead were honoured, and by sunset they built large fires. Apart from "walking through fire" over red hot ashes, every contestant was forgiven for their sins committed against the highest deity. After the midsummer festival the days grew gradually shorter, and the sun was looked upon as dying. But by the winter solstice this changed, and the 25th of December was therefore reckoned to be the birthday of the sun, and the day the sun god was reborn. Henceforth the sun began to grow again. Sun worshippers thought they could help the sun in this process. They lit lights and fires so that the sun could regain light… Christmas celebrations have nothing to do with Christianity, but are a tradition deeply rooted in heathenism. It is not the birthday of Jesus that is celebrated, but Tammuz, the pagan, false messiah. This idolatrous tradition has sneaked its way into Christianity, under the label of "tradition" today. But this trademark is not good enough in God's eyes. Human commands and traditions can never make up for disregarding or replacing the commandments God has given. God said through the prophet Isaiah, "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:6-7)" (Obadiah, (Norwegin magazine) no. 6, August 2000).

"Just like all sun gods at that time Mithra also had his birthday on the 25th of December. The 25th of December was the day of the old Roman festival for the sun's birth. The Arabic Sabaenerne celebrated the moon god's birthday on the 24th of December. In the church in Rome, the 25th of December was celebrated from the year 274 as, "Deis Natalis Solis Invicti", the unconquered sun's birth-

day. Around the year 336 the Christian church decided to confirm the 25th of December as Jesus' birthday… The Christmas tree was common in both heathen Rome and Egypt. In Egypt it was a palm tree, and in Rome it was a fir tree. The sun god's mother was said to have been transformed into a tree when she was going to give birth to her child. The son was therefore counted as the root sprout. The Scandinavian god Odin was thought to have given special gifts around Christmas time to those who went to his holy fir tree." (The Power of Music, Tore Sognefest, 2000).

To eat god

"The communion, or mass of the Catholic Church does not accurately represent the biblical ceremony which the Protestants call, "The Lord's Supper". A series of pagan elements from primitive idolatry have been adopted into the Catholic celebration, so that the most beautiful ceremony has been transformed into a grotesque and idolatrous ceremony. The Catholic Church builds much of its central philosophy concerning the mass, on the thought that Christ's death on the cross was an offering to appease God. This is a terrible deception. It was in the pagan religions that man attempted to appease their gods with sacrifices. The New Testament tells us that Christ's sacrifice was a gift to man from God… When Jesus told the disciples, "this is my body and this is my blood", we are to interpret His statement in line with the rest of the Bible. The Catholic Church does not do this, making these clearly symbolic words rigid, applying them literally. The Catholic Church claims that the wine and the bread, by some mystical process of transubstanciation, is transformed into Christ's actual and literal flesh and blood. The explanation the Church gives is that this transformation is literally and completely real and that the bread even contains Christ's bones, nerves, spirit and soul...

By their mass, the Catholic Church adds insult to Christ's death on the cross. The symbolism that Jesus offered is transformed into an idolatrous ceremony in harmony with the Ancient Babylonian religion. But some may sincerely enquire, Doesn't Jesus say, "This is my flesh"? But when a Scripture text is taken out of context, and the interpretation has no natural relation to the text, then the principles for true Bible exegesis are broken. Imagine what would happen if religious communities interpreted all of Christ's expressions as the Catholic Church has done with the bread and wine; "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John

Above: Hittite (pre-Babylonian, time of Nimrod) sun disc for religious use.

Bottom: John Paul II holding up the sun wafer in front of a crowd.

10:9). “I am the vine, ye are the branches…” (John 15:5) “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman” (John 15:1), ”…that Rock was Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10: 4). Is Jesus a door? A tree? A rock? Of course not, the symbolism is clear.

During the mass, when the Catholic priest blesses the bread and wine, he says in Latin the words, “HOC EST CORPUS MEUS”. What happens in that moment, according to the Papacy, is the transformation of bread and wine to the literal flesh and blood of Christ. It is easy to understand how the magic words, “HOCUS POCUS” originate from this phrase. Furthermore, the Catholic Church teaches that participation in the mass is necessary for one’s deliverance. The church also has a commandment concerning one’s duty toward attending mass on Sundays and holidays. This is totally non-biblical. Salvation does not come through participation in a ritual, whether it be The Lord’s Supper or *even* baptism. Salvation is a gift received by grace by the belief that Jesus died for us. In the Scriptures the Lord’s supper is carried out as an act of rememberance, and the believers’ baptism, in response to a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21).

The historian Durant tells us how this service is one of the ceremonies that came from those ancient, primitive religions. In the highly acclaimed book, “The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics”, Hastings writes extensively in the article, “Eating God”. In this article, and several other sources, we find confirmation that transubstanciation has a background deeply rooted in paganism.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia openly admits that the Eucharist finds it’s origins in the Babylonian “god-meal” practised in Baal worship. From this religion, the tradition of the “god-meal” was spread around the world. In Egypt, a round cake was consecrated (made holy) by a priest, thus being transformed into the body of Osiris. In Mexico and Central America, among those tribes that had never heard of Christ, there were ceremonies where the eating of their god was practiced. Several historians have shown how the custom of eating the “god-meal” in those primitive tribes had a cannibalistic frame. The pagan priests ate parts of all the sacrifices.

But why does the Catholic Church use a circular wafer? Simply because of the same need to transform the bread and wine into literal “god-flesh”, in order to co-ordinate their rituals with the Babylonian, pagan customs. The circular wafer

is a perfect copy of the circular sun-cake which was supposedly transformed into Baal's flesh in the Babylonian religion. The sun god Baal demanded a circular cake, symbolic of the sun. The Catholic mass is nothing more than this Babylonian, idolatrous ceremony revived. The sacrifice is not Christ's sacrifice, and the god that is worshipped is not the God of heaven.

Around the year 1200, a festival for the glory of Christ's flesh (Corpus Christi) was established. This mass of honour was composed by Thomas Aquinas, and as a part of the celebration, the round host (sun-wafer) was carried in procession through the city. This is a detailed copy of the procession in Ancient Babylon, where the sun-cake was carried through the streets. People fell down to worship the "literal christ", the sun-cake. It was Baal they worshipped in those days, and it is still the same idol that is worshipped in this pagan custom today, under the guise of Christianity.

It is paganism at its most blasphemous to assert that Christ is sacrificed again, every time there is a mass. The Lord's Supper is not a revival of Christ's sacrifice. On the cross Jesus said, "It is finished." (John 19:30). In the Old Testament the sacrifice had to be repeated on a daily basis because these animal sacrifices were imperfect sacrifices. In Hebrews we read, "Nor yet that he should offer himself often" (Hebrews 9:25). "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9: 28). "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:10). ("While We Wait", (Norwegian magazine) no. 2, 1992).

The use of statues in worship

It was so important to God to warn us against this form of worship, that He made it the second longest law in the Ten Commandments. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:4-6). Jesus regards this practice as so serious that He refers to those who break this commandment as them that "hate" Him. No wonder Satan, who so hates Jesus, has completely removed this commandment from his "version" of so-called "Chris-

tianity". The Roman Catholic Church has totally removed this commandment from their version of the law. They accumulate large incomes from the sales of statues and images of Mary and Jesus, and Catholics pray before these statues daily. No wonder God calls this power "Babylon the great". The Bible is clear that one of Babylon's worst sins was the use of statues in their worship. God warned them about this over and over again. In Isaiah 21:9 we read, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."

The soon coming fall of "last day" Babylon is described as, "Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble." (Revelation 18:10-12). The warning sounds, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." (Revelation 18:4, 5).

Worship of the Virgin Mary

No statue or picture should be used as a link between God and His true worship-

In this church all one needs to do is put a coin in the machine and little prayers to Jesus and Mary roll out of it.

pers, and He has not given away the honour He requested exclusively for Himself, to some other "queen of heaven".

The apostasy that Israel once wandered into, continues today in the Christian church. Like in Babylon, Mary and the saints have been exalted to receive prayers from the people. Candles are lit before their graves, people bend their knees before their icons, and prayers are offered up to them, so they can present the people's causes before God.

But these traditions do not originate from the Bible; they originate from Babylon. In Babylon they might have a supreme god, but they also added a pantheon of "holy people" or saints that people could pray to, and who were regarded protectors of the people.

Among such traditions was "goddess-worship"; the worship of the woman with stars around her head, her being Ishtar or Inana. Worshipping her was apostasy, and this was the reason God called Abraham (and his kinsmen who participated in this worship) to leave Mesopotamia. Because of this, God wanted to bless Abraham and chose him to present a contrast to this forgery.

The Catholic glorification of the Virgin Mary has no support in Scripture. The Bible only glorifies God and His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself gave glory only to God. No ascension is described regarding Mary. When the new heaven and the new earth are described in the Revelation, the Son is mentioned, but no "Queen of Heaven" and no Mary. When the Bible talks about Jesus as mediator and high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, Mary is never mentioned, nor is a single word mentioned about her in prophecy.

The idea of making the mother of Jesus queen and mediator in heaven is as much of a myth as the worship of Ishtar in Babylon. Like her, Mary is depicted with a crown upon her head, and stars around it. Faithful worshippers bow their knees before her, pray to her, light candles for her, in fact everything that was included in ancient pagan worship is still practiced today.

As it was in Israel, this mixture of truth and error is sure apostasy. As it was in Israel, they do not reject God's name, or service, but add to it their own myths and traditions.

Those who create their own mythological faith aside from the worship of God cannot meet the standard of the first four of the commandments in the Decalogue, which separate true worship from false. Thus the Catholic Church was compelled to alter two of the first four commandments.

If you walk into any Christian bookstore today, you very rarely find the original 10 commandments even on a postcard, while the commandments that have been changed, will most likely cover the bookshelves. The late pope expressed a blessing for those who pray before a particular picture of the Virgin Mary. He claims to have been particularly blessed by praying before it, and openly declares that it was Mary herself that saved his life. "To place in the heart of the heavenly Mother my thanks for having saved me from danger. I saw in everything that was happening (I never tire of repeating it) a special motherly protection of our Lady" (John Paul II, Portugal: Message of Fatima (Bosten: St.Paul's Editions, 1983) pp.49-50)

Furthermore the late pope has stated, "We have recourse to your protection, holy Mother of God... Embrace, with the love of the Mother, and Handmaid, this human world of ours, which we entrust and consecrate to you... In entrusting to you O Mother, the world, all individuals and peoples, we also entrust to you the consecration itself, for the world's sake, placing it in your motherly heart. Oh, Immaculate Heart! Help us to conquer the menace of evil... Accept, O Mother of Christ, this cry... Let there be revealed, once more, in the history of the world your infinite power of merciful Love" (Pope John Paul II, Lòsservatore Romano, May 24, 1982, pp.5,12)

From the second Vatican Council, "For, as St. Irenaeus says, she "being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race". Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert with him in their teaching: "the knot of Eve's disobedience was united by Mary's obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief Mary loosened by her faith." Comparing Mary with Eve, they call her "Mother of the living," and frequently claim: "death through Eve, life through Mary"." (Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Chuch, no.56).

The adoration of Mary is not only rebellion against God's commandments but against Christ Himself, as Mary is honoured in place of Christ and is credited for the work He did, and still does to this day. The apostles never mentioned

Mary as being without sin, as divine, or as specially honoured. The worship of a "Queen of Heaven" is only found in the Bible as apostasy against God. The apostles make it utterly clear that there is no other Saviour than Christ and that no one else is exalted except the Father and His Son. The exaltation of Mary is literally a mythological concept fabricated in harmony with pagan philosophy, totally alien to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and even the apostle Peter. The fact that Mary, a very ordinary (albeit faithful) human being, gave birth to Christ, the Son of God, did not suddenly make her divine, it simply made Jesus human.

Jesus must have been aware of this deception that would creep into the faith of the true Christians, and made Mary's less than elevated position quite clear, "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4) and, "There came his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." (Mark 3:31-35)

In modern times there have been many appearances of Mary around the globe. Many claim that she reveals herself to them in person to tell them of things about to happen. Furthermore one hears of statues of Mary that cry tears of blood, and other signs and wonders, but let us not forget "him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." (2 Thess 2:9)

Despite the worship of Mary being carried out in the name of Christianity, these revelations are not actually from Mary, but from the one that is behind all spiritualistic apparitions, namely Satan himself. The more people who stop praying to God in the name of Jesus, and start sending their prayers to Mary to ask forgiveness, the more people will be lost. Thousands of people have already fallen for this idolatry simply because it is covered in a Christian-like guise. The deceit is grand, but we have been warned, "And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Cor 11:14) and, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal 1:8)

In Ephesus, there was a church council in the year of 431 A.D. The bishop of Alexandria, Cyril, was the initiator behind this gathering.

In those days, Mary-worship started becoming a replacement for the Arthemis-worship that Ephesus once was the centre of. Cyril collected 60 bishops for the council. Nestorius, at that time the bishop of Constantinople, was condemned at this council. He tried to prevent Mary from being regarded a goddess, or be called God's mother in the Christian faith.

Nestorius had invited 43 clergymen from the eastern churches, with John of Antioch as one of them. But they arrived at the meeting too late.

Cyril did not want to wait for them, and decided to start without. Assisted by the pope in Rome and the emperor, Cyril would have had Nestorius condemned even if they had reached the meeting in time, they were told.

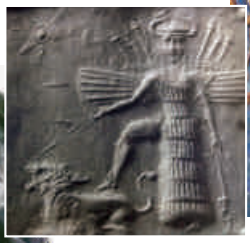
Nestorius was removed from his position as bishop, and Mary-worship advanced.

During the council, quite a number of protesters against Nestorius had gathered outside, shouting that Mary should be exalted to be named "Mother of God."

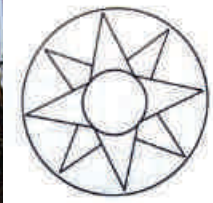
The Babylonian goddess Ishtar became the model for many Middle Eastern, Greek and Roman goddesses.
When Christianity entered the field, all these goddesses were again unified into one figure; Mary. Mary is today addressed by all the titles Ishtar once had, despite the Bible forbidding the worship of the “Queen of Heaven”. Among Ishtars symbols were the eight-sided star, the sun and the lion.

Top right: From a cylinder-seal: the Queen of Heaven, Ishtar, rides a winged lion (symbolizing Babylon in the Bible)
Far Right: From a hanging carpet in the Vatican: Mary rides a winged lion.

Small pictures to the right: No 1. The throne of Ishtar has a lion inside. No 2. Ishtar has one foot upon the lion.



Left: Two lions surround a tree from ancient Babylon.
To the right: The Virgin Mary’s emblem from the Church of Mary (Poland’s most sacred place):
The name Mary inside the sun on one side, and the lions leaning on the tree on the other side.



Here is Mary drawn with several eight-sided stars on her coat. The eight-sided star was a symbol of Ishtar.

Top right: Mary surrounded by a circle of stars. Right: Babylonian Ishtar with similar circle.

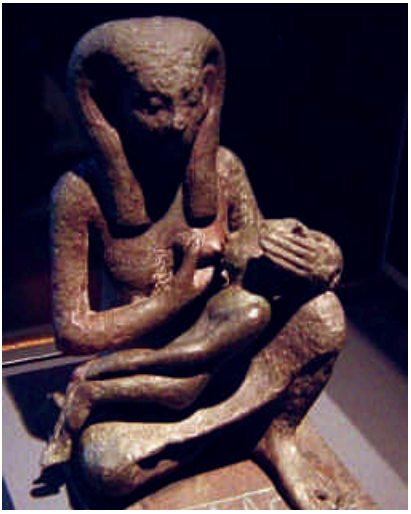
The Babylonian goddess Ishtar was also portrayed with a circle of stars around her. (At the picture to the left there is also the eight-sided star.)

Right: Mary.

In the heathen religions, mother worship was central. Frequently the mother goddess was the mother of the sun god, and thereby the mother of the “life-giver”.

The Bible warns against worshipping the Queen of Heaven, and has only accepted worship of the Father and the Son. That a woman should be worshipped as a queen of heaven, was an apostasy from the truth.
The fact that Jesus was born into this world did not make the biological mother divine, it made Jesus human, thus on a level where He could be an example and a help to us.
From the time of the Babylonians, and throughout the time of the great empires, the Mother of God(s) was worshipped. This worship continued when Rome declared Mary divine.
Heathenism portrayed their mother goddess with one breast bare to feed the sun god or other gods. The symbolism suggested the mother was the source of life.
On the contrary the Bible teaches that God, the Father is the source of all living, and that his Son alone is exalted. No female figure in the Bible is honoured with any such exaltation.

Top: From Babylon
To the left: From Egypt
To the right: Mary in the same position.



To the right: The Hittite sun goddess Arianne from 1400-1200 B.C.

To the left: Statue of Sumerian Inanna (Babylonian Ishtar) was often depicted emphasizing her breasts.

Above Right: The Egyptian counterpart to the Babylonian Ishtar, was Isis. Here with her breasts bare feeding her divine son Horus.
Picture no. 2: From Asia, the goddess breastfeeding

Below to the left: Statue from Roman times, with her feeding baby.

Right: Mary exposing her breasts feeding Jesus.

Top Left: The Queen of Heaven from paganisim was depicted with outstretched hands. Bottom Left: Statue of the Virgin Mary. Mary has become even dearer than God to the Catholics. She is also depicted with her hands outstretched. This counterfeit worship is in defiance God's commandments.

We are only commanded to worship Him that made heaven and earth:

"Thus shall ye say unto them, the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens" (Jer 10:11)

Time and again God's people have fallen away and started worshipping a queen of heaven. The same today has happened with the Christians, despite their Bible never describing Mary as divine, a queen, or as the mother of God. Her ascension is not mentioned, nor is she described as ever having any future service.

The Bible has but one focus; God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. All other worship is a human invention and a repetition of the apostasy that God hates.

"Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying: as for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the lord, we will not hearken unto thee." (Jer 44:15-16)

"And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men? Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him that answer, saying, the incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember them, and came it not unto His mind? So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed, therefore is your land desolation, and astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day.

Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the lord, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, nor walked in His law, nor in His statutes, nor in His testimonies, therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day." (Jer 44:19-23)

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger? Saith the Lord. Do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus saith the Lord God: behold mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched." (Jer 7:18-20)

This mosaic work picturing Mary and Jesus was placed at Saint Peter's Square by order of Pope John Paul II. The picture is a memorial of the attempted assassination of the pope as the pope himself has declared that he believes it was Mary that saved him from death.
The Latin inscription "totus tuus" (completely yours), was the motto of the pope, and it was also embroidered on both sleeves of his jacket.

The pope also donated similar pictures to other churches. On the one given to Saint Olav's church in Oslo, Norway, it says, "The Holy Father, Pope John Paul II blesses those who pray hail Mary in front of this picture."

The prayer hail Mary, "Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death. Amen."

Mary was just a human being that died in a natural way. Any prayer to the dead is a continuation of heathenism, closing the eyes to the words of the Bible regarding the dead not participating in anything that happens on earth.

The Bible says praying to the dead is praying to demons. Demons exist, and can give answers to prayers, but it is not from God, "a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee" (Deut 18:11-12).

From Babylon. Just some gold left on this statue.

The Egyptians also clothed their images with gold and silver.

Below: The tradition spoken of in the Bible is today found in the Catholic Church. Here is child Jesus and Mary clothed with gold and pearls.

Saints and gods

In ancient Babylon, the people thought the stars were their dead patriarchs, and this false belief was the basis for the worship of the celestial bodies. The worship of gods ruling over various aspects of one's life is not new in theological concept. In Egypt they also had this form of religion. The people prayed to the god that was responsible for whatever aspect of life was pertinent at the time. Worshipers could change which of the various gods to pray to. When we study the heroic Babylonian gods and the Egyptian gods of various themes, we find an exact likeness to the Catholic ordained, worship of the saints. They have maintained the exact same practise, but simply changed the names of the heroic gods to so-called Christian saints. To carry out a pagan practice abominable to God, but simply change its name, renders it no less of an abomination to God. It still revolves around worshipping dead people. No place in the entire Bible is there anything that encourages prayer to the dead, nor indeed prayer to anyone but God.

"In addition to Mary worship, Catholics also pray to a number of saints. According to Catholic belief, they are ordinary people that have excelled due to a special holiness or because of special deeds done for the church. After their death, and after an official investigation, they were declared, "saints" and thus it was declared that they had been taken to heaven. This doctrine is easily traced back to the Babylonian religion. The Catholic Church believes and practices spiritism through prayers to the dead, whether it is Mary or the saints. The Catholic Encyclopaedia explains that Catholic doctrine regarding prayers to the dead has it's roots in the congregation of the apostles, but this allegation proves to be untrue. If we go back to the mother-system for all false religions again, Ancient Babylon, we find that people during that time worshipped and honoured many gods. The Babylonians had a system with no less than 5000 gods and goddesses! They also believed that these gods had once been religious patriarchs that had once excelled here on earth, but that they were now "rewarded" with a higher spiritual existence. Every month, indeed, nearly every day of the year was under the protection of one of these lesser gods. The belief in several gods, spread around the world (in much the same way as "mother and child" worship) when people emigrated from Babylon. Even the earlier Buddhists in China worshipped several lesser gods. They had gods for sailors, gods of war, gods for the various different communities, indeed, gods for a whole variety of different aspects of life. The Syrians believed that some of these gods had a limited

jurisdiction and could not exercise their power outside a particular geographic region. 1 Kings 20:23 is an example of that. When the Romans conquered the world, the belief in the Babylonian spirit world and order was still very much in place. Bright was the goddess of the poets, Juno Regina was the goddess of feminism and marriage. Minerva was the goddess of wisdom and music. Venus was the goddess of sex and love. Vesta protected all the bakers of bread. Ceres was the goddess of corn and wheat. Hercules was the god of joy and wine. Mercury gave abilities to speakers and those who debated. (It was no coincidence that the people in Lystra thought the eloquent Paul was the god Mercury see Acts 14:11, 12.) This is just a small selection. There was actually a god or goddess for everything and everyone. For money, houses, gardens, food, dolls, health and illness etc. etc. When Christianity became a popular state-religion in Rome, former "pagans" came to the church by the thousand. With them they brought a myriad of different gods. The church, who was now more of a political power than a spiritual power, found it easy to accommodate all these lesser gods in the Roman Church. They were well accepted, but were gradually allocated new names; "saints". The fact that ancient pagan idolatry from Babylon lives on in Catholic saint-worship can in no way be denied. The Papacy themselves admit this in several books, writings and in their conference resolutions. Here is a list of some of the Catholic Church's saints, or rather, Babylonian, pagan idols.

Occupation	**Name**	**Saint's day**
Actors	- St. Genesius	25 of August
Architect	- St. Thomas	21 of December
Bakers	- St. Elizabeth	19 of November
Beggars	- St Alexius	7 of July
Butchers	- St. Hadrian	28 of September
Cooks	- St. Martha	29 of July
Doctors	- St. Lucas	18 of October
Hatmakers	- St. Jacob	11 of May
Hunters	- St. Hubert	3 of November
Miners	- St. Barbara	4 of December
Nurses	- St. Catherine	30 of April
Sailors	- St. Brendan	16 of May
Singers	- St. Gregory	12 of March
Students	- St. Thomas Aquinas	7 of March
Tax inspectors	- St. Matteus	21 of September

The Roman Catholic Church also has a saint for sterile women (St. Anthony), beer drinkers (St. Nicholas), children (St. Dominic), lovers (St. Raphael), virgins (St. Andrew), the poor (St. Lawrence) and so on and so forth. Furthermore, the Papacy has produced saints for about every disease that exists. The church recommends that sick people pray to these saints to better their chances of healing. It is historically documented and confirmed by the Catholic Church, that saint-worship of the Catholic Church is a direct inheritance from the pagan Babylonian religion, where gods or goddesses protect certain days, occupations or human needs." (The Great Apostasy; Saint Worship. "While We Wait", (Norwegian magazine) no. 2, 1992).

In the Catholic Encyclopaedia on pages 130-131 in the article, "Legends" we read, "These legends (saints) repeat the ideas that we find in pre-Christian stories. The legends are not Christian, only made Christian. On several occasions the legends regarding our saints, are built on the same pre-Christian myths. It was simple to transfer the stories that antiquity connected to their heroes, to our Christian martyrs. This explains the great likeness between gods and saints."

Saints – Spiritism and the state of the dead

The Bible tells us about a man who decided to petition a dead prophet for help. This story is a serious warning to us even in our time. We find the event recorded in 1 Samuel. "Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land… And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there

shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me." (1 Samuel 28:3-21).

"The Scripture account of Saul's visit to the woman of Endor has been a source of perplexity to many students of the Bible. There are some who take the position that Samuel was actually present at the interview with Saul, but the Bible itself furnishes sufficient ground for a contrary conclusion. If, as claimed by some, Samuel was in heaven, he must have been summoned thence, either by the power of God or by that of Satan. None can believe for a moment that Satan had power to call the holy prophet of God from heaven to honour the incantations of an abandoned woman. Nor can we conclude that God summoned him to the witch's cave; for the Lord had already refused to communicate with Saul, by dreams, by Urim, or by prophets. 1 Samuel 28:6. These were God's own

appointed mediums of communication, and He did not pass them by to deliver the message through the agent of Satan.

The message itself is sufficient evidence of its origin. Its object was not to lead Saul to repentance, but to urge him on to ruin; and this is not the work of God, but of Satan. Furthermore, the act of Saul in consulting a sorceress is cited in Scripture as one reason why he was rejected by God and abandoned to destruction: "Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; and inquired not of the Lord: therefore He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse." (1 Chronicles 10:13, 14). Here it is distinctly stated that Saul inquired of the familiar spirit, not of the Lord. He did not communicate with Samuel, the prophet of God; but through the sorceress he held intercourse with Satan. Satan could not present the real Samuel, but he did present a counterfeit, that served his purpose of deception…

This same belief in communion with the dead formed the cornerstone of heathen idolatry. The gods of the heathen were believed to be the deified spirits of departed heroes. Thus the religion of the heathen was a worship of the dead. This is evident from the Scriptures. In the account of the sin of Israel at Bethpeor, it is stated: "Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor." Numbers 25:1-3. The psalmist tells us to what kind of gods these sacrifices were offered. Speaking of the same apostasy of the Israelites, he says, "They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead" (Psalm 106:28); that is, sacrifices that had been offered to the dead.

The deification of the dead has held a prominent place in nearly every system of heathenism, as has also the supposed communion with the dead. The gods were believed to communicate their will to men, and also, when consulted, to give them counsel. Of this character were the famous oracles of Greece and Rome.

The belief in communion with the dead is still held, even in professedly Christian lands. Under the name of spiritualism the practice of communicating with beings claiming to be the spirits of the departed has become widespread. It is

calculated to take hold of the sympathies of those who have laid their loved ones in the grave. Spiritual beings sometimes appear to persons in the form of their deceased friends, and relate incidents connected with their lives and perform acts that they performed while living. In this way they lead men to believe that their dead friends are angels, hovering over them and communicating with them. Those who thus assume to be the spirits of the departed are regarded with a certain idolatry, and with many their word has greater weight than the word of God.

There are many, however, who regard spiritualism as a mere imposture. The manifestations by which it supports its claims to a supernatural character are attributed to fraud on the part of the medium. But while it is true that the results of trickery have often been palmed off as genuine manifestations, there have also been marked evidences of supernatural power. And many who reject spiritualism as the result of human skill or cunning will, when confronted with manifestations which they cannot account for upon this ground, be led to acknowledge its claims.

Modern spiritualism and the forms of ancient witchcraft and idol worship—all having communion with the dead as their vital principle—are founded upon that first lie by which Satan beguiled Eve in Eden: "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof. . . ye shall be as gods." Genesis 3:4, 5. Alike based upon falsehood and perpetuating the same, they are alike from the father of lies.

The Hebrews were expressly forbidden to engage in any manner in pretended communion with the dead. God closed this door effectually when He said: "The dead know not anything. . . Neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun." Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalm 146:4. And the Lord declared to Israel: "The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set My face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people." Leviticus 20:6.

The "familiar spirits" were not the spirits of the dead, but evil angels, the messengers of Satan. Ancient idolatry, which, as we have seen, comprises both worship of the dead and pretended communion with them, is declared by the Bible to have been demon worship. The apostle Paul, in warning his brethren against

participating, in any manner, in the idolatry of their heathen neighbors, says, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." 1 Corinthians 10:20. The psalmist, speaking of Israel, says that "they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils," and in the next verse he explains that they sacrificed them "unto the idols of Canaan." Psalm 106:37, 38. In their supposed worship of dead men they were in reality worshiping demons.

Modern spiritualism, resting upon the same foundation, is but a revival in a new form of the witchcraft and demon worship that God condemned and prohibited of old. It is foretold in the Scriptures, which declare that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 1 Timothy 4:1. Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, points to the special working of Satan in spiritualism as an event to take place immediately before the second advent of Christ. Speaking of Christ's second coming, he declares that it is "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." 2 Thessalonians 2:9." (Patriarchs and Prophets, Ellen G. White, page 683-686).

There is one common feature with the Catholic worship of Mary and of the saints; they are all dead. Any form of prayer to the dead is idolatry, and is flirting with the occult, "…a charmer or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD" (Deuteronomy 18:11-12).

"Come out of her My people"!

Jesus said that those doing the works of Abraham were the children of Abraham, and so it is easy to understand why He calls the Catholic Church Babylon. For indeed, they do the works of Babylon do they not? "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24). Therefore God gives the following calling to all those sincere souls caught up in all false religions, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4).

“You shall not make to you any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:4-6). The second commandment of the Ten Commandments was removed by the Catholic Church.

Top Left: A statue claimed by the Vatican to be an image of Peter receives great honour by the pilgrims.

Middle Left: Prayers in front of statues.

Bottom Left: This picture of the virgin Mary receives great veneration and people kneel in front of the image.

Above: Statue of Christ is the centre of prayer and worship.

Statues and images are central to the worship of Mary. Even though Catholics claim they do not worship the statues, there are few who dare to turn their back to an image of Christ, Mary or the saints.

Left: A goddess in her shrine from Pergamon. Below: How the pagans worshipped their gods.

Right: Today it is the Catholic Church who continues this religious practice and have put Mary in a typical pagan shrine.

Baal means Lord, and possibly the Israelites imagined that it was their own LORD they placed around their country. To God this was apostasy.
Top Left: A stone relief of Baal.
Top Right: A stone relief of Christ.
Below & Left: Statues of Mary are placed in gardens and in cities.

“You shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither raise you up a standing image, neither shall you set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down to it: for I am the LORD your God” (Lev 26:1).

Pagan shrines from Ephesus and Pompeii. In Pompeii they had shrines on the street corners (pic to the right) as well as in their homes.

Shrines placed in Italy and Poland. All of them containing images of Mary.

Many Catholic officials try to excuse image worship by claiming images are only symbols of God that lead man's thoughts to Him. This is a lie as the thoughts will go to whoever the image is of, whether it be saints, popes or Mary. This is idolatrous worship. The heathen religions did not believe that the god they worshiped was literally inside the image or the statue either. They thought the same as Catholics do today. The Akkadian word, Salmu (Sumerian: "nu" or "alam" (both early Babylonian dynasties)) was used on artistic images of gods. It could mean "image", "representation" or "representative". The word was used to refer to statues and icons. Later the word was also used for the sun god himself, but this reveals that the Babylonians did not believe that their work of art was actually god, but only images and representations of god.

Below: From the Catholic Church: A monk kneeling in front of an image of a dead monk, elevated to sainthood, hoping that his prayer will reach the dead, and then the dead will mediate between him and God.

In heathen religions their worship was inextricably linked to the dead. When Israel had a falling away at Beth Peor, it says, “They joined themselves also to Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead” (Psalm 106:28).

Top: Most Catholic churches are actually graveyards in a very literal sense. Here in Rome, the casket of the dead in front, and a bench in front where people can kneel and pray. Left: An old Egyptian tomb with an altar in front. Bottom Left: The bone of a saint on display in a Catholic Church.

Among other cultures, dead heroes were often associated with a temple, “...they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: why I have consumed them in my anger. Now let them put away their prostitution, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the middle of them for ever” (Ezekiel 43:8-9).

“A special case is provided by extensive records from Girsu from the Early Dynastic Period of offerings made before prayer statues of deceased rulers and members of the ruling family: these statues were, it is assumed, originally dedicated by the living to stand in temples and pray constantly for them before the gods” (Gods, Demons and Symbols of ancient Mesopotamia, An illustrated dictionary by Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, The British Museum Press)

When Pope John Paul II was to be buried, onlookers shouted, “Sanctify him! Sanctify him!”. This tradition of placing deceased leaders in a temple was used by pagan Rome, but also in ancient Babylon. Today the Catholic Church is continuing this tradition.

From Catholic churches in Rome: Statue of a deceased pope in the church hall. Bottom: Statue of dead pope with a casket below, placed in the church.

Hell.

The word hell is often used by Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals to scare their congregations. When we open our Bibles we do find the word "hell" and therefore it is easy to assume that this concept of "hell" is biblically correct, but the common interpretation of this word is from Babylon, and not from the truth that Abraham's children were given.

The Bible teaches that "the dead know not any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5), and "they shall be as ashes under their feet" (Malachi 4:3) . There is a penalty for sin which is death. The Bible compares the death of the ungodly with the death of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 1:7). These cities were burnt by fire and brimstone from heaven. Today only the ash and the brimstone remain, but nothing is burning now. The fire has stopped. Eternal life was to be given to the faithful, but those that would not follow Christ would be sentanced to death, meaning they would not receive "eternal life" in hell, but that they would become as if they never had been.

When we find the word "hell" among the words of Christ, it is worth noting that He spoke within the Jewish mindset and not the pagan. For He said, "all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44). Christ came to confirm that what they had been taught through the law and the prophets was correct.

The word Christ used which is translated to "hell", is "gehenna", which is an area outside Jerusalem's city wall where they burnt garbage. Sometimes the fire burnt for days until there was nothing left to burn. The use of the word is often misunderstood today. A fire that cannot be extinguished until everything is burnt up, is incorrectly interpreted as a fire that will never stop burning.

To be able to burn man for eternity, God has to recreate the man that is burning over and over again, or to make him inconsumable, but this is not in harmony with the word of God.

The word "forever" is used in the Bible, but the Hebrew expression that it is translated from does not necessarily mean 'a never ending period of time'. It can also mean 'a limited period of time'. It depends in what context the word is used. In the story of the prophet Jonah who was swallowed by a great fish, it

says that “her bars was about me for ever” (Jonah 2:6), but Jonah was only there 3 days and 3 nights.

The last argument used to maintain the pagan interpretation of hell in the Christian faith, is that the apostles have used the Greek word, “hades”. Hades was the Greek word for the kingdom of death, where there was said to be fire and misery. After an ancient copy of the gospel of Matthew was discovered, it has been speculated that the gospels and the New Testament writings were originally written in Hebrew. The most important thing is not what word was used in the Greek, but what Christ and His apostles really believed. They were Jews not Greeks. They had a Jewish understanding of death, and not Greek.

The Old Testament is clear that the loss of eternal life is final, the decision is eternal and that the dead will be burnt up. The doctrine of hell as we know it among Christians today is a myth that originates in Babylon. A myth that the Greeks and the Romans subsequently adopted into their own beliefs. Even though myths often changed or developed, the Babylonians believed in a underworld that was populated by demons. (Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, The British Museum Press, 1992, p.63). They believed that the demons were placed there by the gods to punish the sinners. The Bible on the other hand says the Devil is in opposition to God, and not someone who works with Him.

Of the Babylonian teaching it is written, “The underworld is always described as in complete darkness, dusty and unpleasant. All the dead, without exception, wander there, thirsting for water and having only dust to eat... Apart from these spirits of the dead (gidim), the underworld is also the home of the dead gods, of some demons (who are described as the ‘offspring of arali’ and who issue from the underworld to bring tribulation to mankind...” (Ibid. p.108). In the Sumerian poem “Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Underworld” a conversation is described; “between Gilgames and the ghost of his dead servant Enkidu which makes it clear that while life in the underworld is most unattractive, it can be made slightly more tolerable if surviving relatives make regular offerings to the dead of food and drink, so that it is desirable to leave as many descendants as possible. Those who have no children have a hard time indeed after death, while those who do not even receive proper burial are worst off: the person who died in a fire or whose body lies in the desert does not even have a *gidim* in the underworld.” (Ibid. p.181).

This Babylonian myth must have created a lot of sorrow among the poorer families and those who were dying and did not have a family.

In the same way this Babylonian myth was passed down and made to fit with Christian doctrine by the Catholic Church. The doctrine of purgatory has created problems for millions of poor people and for those without families during the Middle Ages. It supposed that the families of the deceased could reduce their time in purgatory by their own good deeds, and by paying indulgences to the Church, but if they did not have Catholic family members, "Roman Catholic theologians are not in agreement as to the nature of the suffering in purgatory. Some teach that the pain of purgatory is chiefly a sense of loss in being separated from God. Others, following Thomas Aquinas, teach that souls in purgatory suffer intense and excruciating physical pain from fire" (The Gospel According to Rome, James G. McCarthy, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1995).

"Another way in which the living can help the dead is by acquiring special credits, called indulgences, that cancel out temporal punishment [1032, 1479]. Roman Catholicism teaches that the church has the power to dispense indulgences from a vast reservoir of merit called the treasury of the Church [1476, 1477]" (Ibid p.94).

It was a tough time for those who did not get enough attention after their death or for those who did not receive a proper burial in the time of Babylon and in the Catholic Church during the Dark Ages. Christ knew of these pagan doctrines that flourished when He walked the earth. His attitude was of a different character, because He knew those things claimed by the heathen were not true. There was no reason to worry for the dead. He said, "Let the dead bury the dead" (Luke 9:60).

God hid the burial place of Moses from the children of Israel in a time when they had been guilty of worshiping Baal and Peor (worshiping the dead). Therefore the tomb of Moses was hidden from them so they would not think that, even though Moses had been a godly man, they could pray to him or make his grave a place of worship. In Babylon there was a belief which had influenced everyone except the Jews. The Babylonian hell was an underworld with god's or demons ruling in it. A teaching which today has become Christian. "The notion

of an underworld peopled by terrifying demonic beings, which foreshadowed the medieval hell, seems to have been a theological invention of the first millennium B.C." (Gods, Demons and Symbols of ancient Mesopotamia, An Illustrated Dictionary by Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, The British Museum Press, 1992, p.28).

Top: Here Satan and the demons are taking a group of people to hell (on the right side of the picture). The demons are depicted as half animal and half man with horns. No where in the Bible is the devil or his demons described as having horns or animalistic bodies. This is a Babylonian invention. The picture here is from the Catholic church of Notre Dame in Paris.

Below Left: Old statue from before Christ showing a mythological, demonic creature.
Below Right: Asian demon mask.

According to the prophecies of the end-time, Babylon was one, “With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Rev 17:2).

Top: During the Middle Ages the Catholic Church enjoyed great control over the many kings of Europe. The images here are from the Vatican and shows the pope crowning kings. Bottom: Kings and queens are buried in Catholic churches throughout Europe. For example, in Saint Deny’s in Paris, and the Catholic inflenced church in Berlin (Right) the entire basement is full of bodies, in addition to a great number on display in the church’s main hall.

The Catholic Church has often used claims of miracles to win the people.

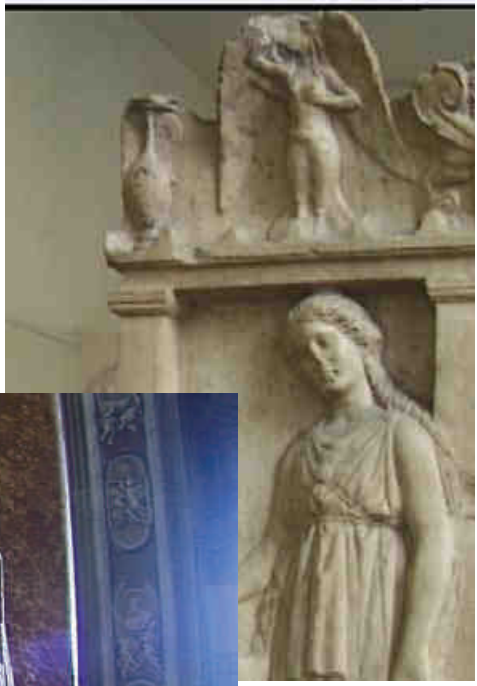
Top: The Catholic saint Deny claims to have picked up his own head after it was chopped off.
Left: This picture is from the Catholic church and shows someone who is supposedly raised from the dead.
Below: Mary's Church in Poland tempts thousands of pilgrims. It claims that those that come and pray in front of a picture of Mary can be cured. Crutches hang on the walls.

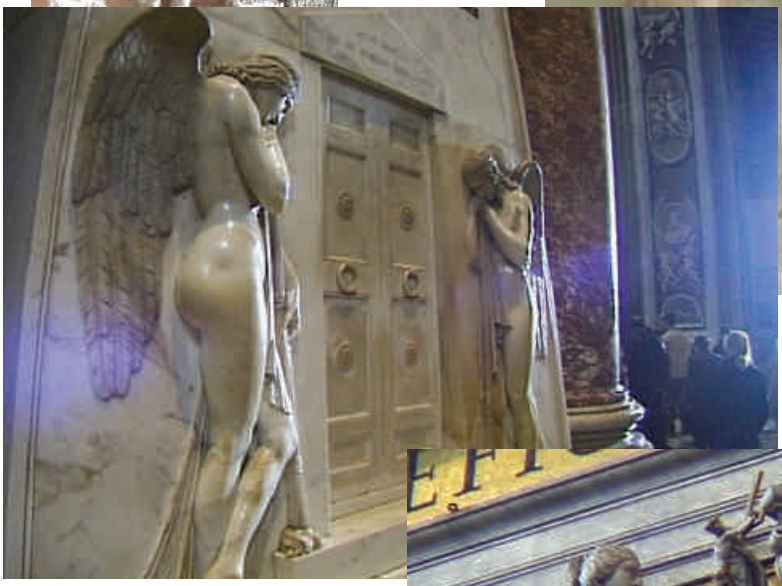
The two bottom pictures: A monk performing miracles; making a donkey kneel and making fish gather just by his presence.

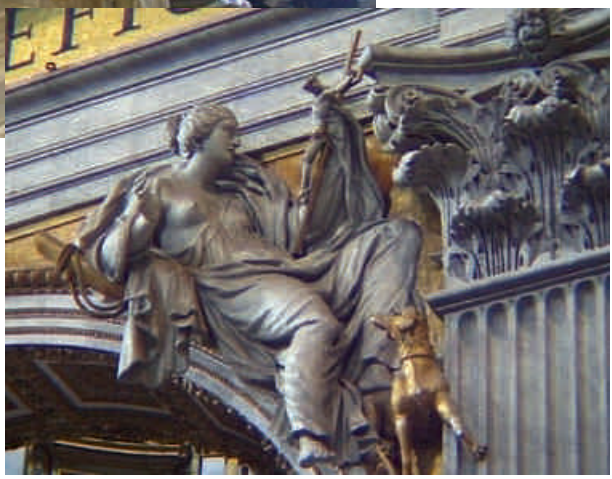
"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess 2:9).

The God of the Bible wrote the Ten Commandment law with His own finger, and forbids anyone to make an image of Him. In the pagan religions gods were often portrayed naked. Left: Naked Babylonian goddess.

Right: At the top of the picture is a naked angel displaying her breasts.







Above: From St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. According to the Bible, man was created a little lower than the angels. Here man has used angels as decoration and "honoured" them by making them naked.

Right: St Peter's Basilica. Woman displaying her breasts while holding the cross with a crucified Christ.

The Catholic Church is very concerned that visitors are modestly dressed, totally covering up their shoulders and legs, prohibiting access to people wearing shorts, but once the visitor is through the church doors, they see several naked statues!

Top left: From Saint Deny's Church in Paris.
Top right: Christ half naked on a cloud. (Also notice the naked angel figure above him to the left with it's legs around the cross.)

After the fall of man it is recorded that Adam and Eve hid from the Lord because they were naked. Despite the fact that they had sinned against God, the Bible reveals that He Himself made clothing for them and dressed them. This was the respect God showed the very people who offended Him. In return the Catholic Church stripped God and thereby revealed their true character. (Left)

Below Right: The Bible does not say that Christ was naked when He was taken to be crucified, even though the Catholic church in Poland has chosen to leave Christ completely undressed in their images.

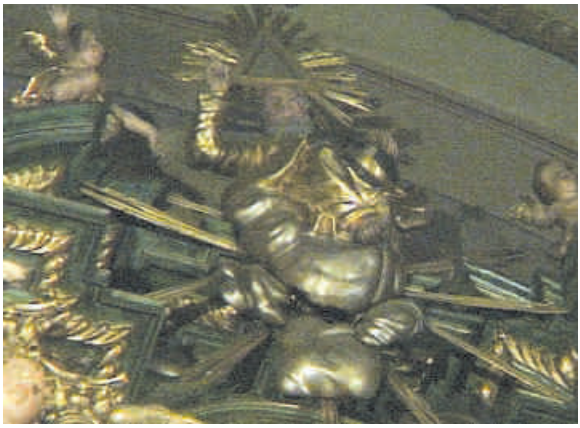
A half naked Christ is a favourite depiction in the Catholic Church. Even though they draw Him sitting on a throne, He is often deprived the dignity of clothing covering His body. On the other hand, the statues of their own popes and saints are not only modestly dressed, but actually very grandly dressed.

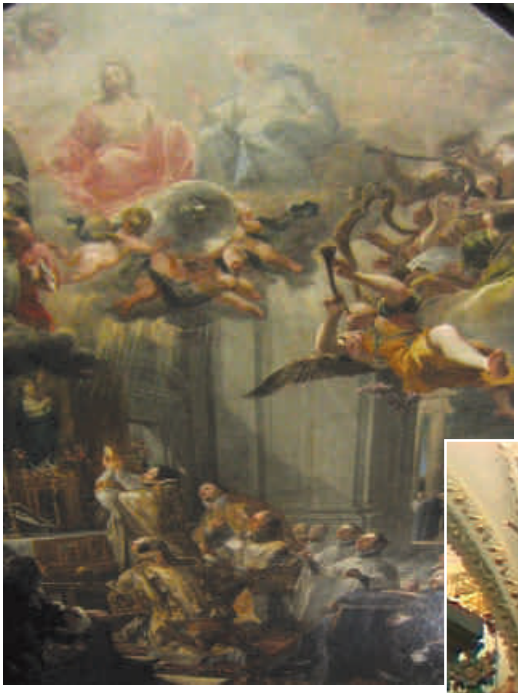
Deut 27:15 warns, “Cursed be the man that makes any graven or molten image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and puts it in a secret place”. Deut 4:15, 16 & 19, “Take you therefore good heed to yourselves; for you saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spoke to you in Horeb out of the middle of the fire: Lest you corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female... And lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them...”.

Romans 1:23, “And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man...”.

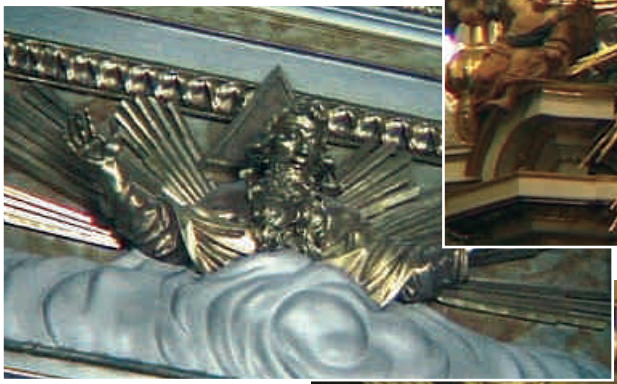
Isaiah 40:18-23, 25, “To whom then will you liken God? or what likeness will you compare to him? The workman melts a graven image, and the goldsmith spreads it over with gold, and casts silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he has no oblation chooses a tree that will not rot; he seeks to him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved. Have you not known? have you not heard? has it not been told you from the beginning? ...To whom then will you liken me, or shall I be equal? said the Holy One”.

Top: From the Catholic Church in Istanbul. God and Christ depicted crowning Mary (the crowning of Mary is not in the Bible)
Below: Images and a statues of God covered in silver and gold. These images are disrespectful and are in direct disobedience to God.





Left: God shown with Christ. God is sitting on the cloud “condoning” with His presence the Catholic mass, where the priest holds the Eucharist in front of a statue of Mary.



Different gilded images of God.

Top: God illustrated in different ways, all from the Catholic Church.
Bottom: This image hangs in the Vatican and shows Mary as part of the Trinity. Notice that it is Mary who receives the worship of angels. The image is a mockery of God and exalts Mary to be equal with God.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

(2 Corinthians 6:14)

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.”

(Rev 18:4)

The following traditions are not from the Bible but have been added to Christian teachings by, among others, the Catholic Church:
Canon Law, Bullarium, Encyclical, Canon, Breviary, Litany, Sacerdotale, Rubric, Collect, Offertory, Introit, Ritual, Prebend, Supererogation, Absolution, Confessional, Indult, Limbo, Transubstantiation, Mass (6 forskjellige), Requiem Mass, Low Mass, High Mass, Nuptial Mass, Votive Mass, Mass Bell, Sprinkling, Infant Baptism, God Mother, Pater Noster, Decree, Dogma, Missal, Liturgy, Litany of the Saints, Catechism, Sacramentary, Preface, Gradual, Antiphon, Stipend, Novena, Treasury of Merit, Dispensation, Pennance, Purgatory, Indulgence, Communion under one kind, Instrumental Music, Pouring, Ave Maria, Te Deum, Lent, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Duties, Corporal, Sacrementals, Extreme Unction, Candles, Incense, Crucifix, Agnus Dei, Scapulars, Ashes, Relics, Blessing Cars, Blessing Cemeteries, Blessing Distilleries, Blessing weapons, Epiphany, Mortal sin, Latria, Diptychs, Praying for the Dead, Stations of the Cross, Infallibility of the Pope, Celibacy, Easter, All Saints Day, Fish on Friday, Canonical Hours, Sacraments, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Holy Water, Rosary, Sign of the Cross, Way of the Cross, Miraculous Medals, Palm Leaves, Shrines, Cosecrated Cemeteries, Canonising, Canonised Saints, Original Sin, Venial Sin, Dulia, Praying to Mary, Saints, Images, Immaculate Conception, Sunday sabbath, "Catholic Church"

Organisational structure within the church which is not Scriptural.
Hierarchy, Clergy, Pope, Pontiff, Pontifex Maximus, Vicar of God and Christ, Vicegerant of God, Cardinal, Archbishop, Metropolitan, Bishop, Prelate, Prelate Nullius, Abbot, Abbot Nullius, Abbis, Vicar, Vicar General, Superior, Mother Superior, Nuncio, Chancellor, Prefects Apostolic, Legate, Dean, Canon, Apostolic Camera, Cameralengo, Cleric, Clerk, Licentiate, Laity, Laic, Ordinary, Regular, Rector, Interstice, sacred Penitentiary, Orders, Holy Orders, Mendicant Orders, Cura, Curator, Archdeacons, Subdeacon, Archpriests, Confessor, Lector, Ostiary, Doorkeeper, Porter, Monk, Nun, Fiar, Prior, Religious, Quasireligious, Euharistic Christ, Acolyte, Catechumen, Sodality.

Monarchical Bishops, Pontificate, Curia, Congregation of Holy Office (Inquisition), Constetutions of the Chatolic Church, Congregation of the Discipline of the Sacrements, Congregation of the Council, Congregation of the Affairs of Religious, Congregation of the Propoganda, Congregation of the Index, Congregation of rites, Cermonial Congregation, Congregation of Extraordinary Eccle-

siastical Affairs, Congregation of Studies, Sacred Penitentiary, Sacred Roman Rota, Apostolic Segnatura, Apostolic Chancery, Apostolic Datary, Apostolic Camera, Papal Secretary of State, College of Cardinals, Secretary of Brief to Princes, Secretary of Latin Letters, Councils, Synods, Nuncios, Diocese, Parish, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Carmelites, Hospitallers, Templars etc.

Some quotations from the Catholic Church:
"Akin to these divine laws is the purely ecclesiastical law or law of the Church. Christ sent forth His Church clothed with His own and His Father's authority… To enable her to carry out this divine plan she makes laws, laws purely ecclesiastical, but laws that have the same binding force as the divine laws themselves... For Catholics, therefore, as far as obligations are concerned there is no practical difference between God's law and the law of the Church" (Explanation of Catholic Morals, John H. Stapleton, Benziger Bros., New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, 1904, p.26)

"In other spiritual books the truths of the Bible are presented more fully, and in a more modern and familiar style, so that we can hardly wonder that they are, as a rule preferred; and that though Catholic families generally have a Bible, it is more venerated than read" (Plain Facts, Geo. M. Searle, Paulist Press, N.Y., 1915, p.154).

Regarding the Reformation, it is written "The Reformation produced indeed an exaggerated individualism, which by declaring every man equally competent to find out doctrine of the Saviour from his own private reading of the Scriptures, has led millions to the utter denial of Christ." (The Question Box, p. 131, Bertrand L. Conway, The Columbus press, N.Y., 1913).

To an extent Bertrand is correct. A study of the Bible has led many Christians out of the Catholic Church and away from the type of Messiah represented by them. The Catholic Christ and the Christ of the Bible are very different in teaching and character. The more you learn of Christ in Scripture, the easier it is to distance yourself from the Catholic Jesus.

Many of the Christian traditions are inspired by Scripture, but many of the fabricated traditions do away with God's commandments or are placed in their stead. Just as the sacredness of Sunday has replaced God's holy Sabbath. Other tradi-

tions like the veneration of Mary, saints and graven images, have made void the law of God, and these are traditions that are practiced despite the fact that the Bible clearly forbids them.

The Rebellion of Antichrist

The commandments that the Catholic Church violate as an organisation are the same commandments that were designed to glorify God. It seems that the one who is behind the whole plot is the one who has hated God since the beginning of the world. The commandments that God gave man as a sign of his loyalty to Him, are the same commandments the Devil has tricked man into breaking, using the belief that such disobedience is to the honour of God.

The First Four Commandments: Worshipping the true God as your lawgiver.	The Rebellion of Antichrist:
1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.	**1.**The Catholic Church has offered the people many saints they can kneel and pray to. Mary has been made Queen of Heaven and been given divinity and is prayed to. They also request man to kneel before the pope.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.	**2.**This commandment has been removed by the Catholic Church. Their churches are full of statues and images to pray in front of.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.	**3**. Everything the Catholic Church does, is done in the name of God, but the pictures of "God" and the teachings they endorse in the name of God, are an abuse of His name.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.	**4**.The only commandment that testifies as to who the true Lawgiver is, has been changed by the Catholic Church. The day that God hallowed has been trodden under foot to the exaltation of Sunday, which the Church has sanctified. The disobedience is carried out in the name of God and is therefore a mockery against God.

The Antichrist's Attempt to Destroy God's Temple

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
(2 Thessalonians 2:4)

The Ark of the Covenant
(God's commandments and the atonement sacrifice)
The Catholic Church has removed the second commandment and changed the fourth. They changed God's Sabbath and transferred the sanctity of God's chosen day to their own day; Sunday. They have also deceived people into breaking the first and the third commandment.

Altar of incense
(Symbolizing prayer)
"He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9). By tricking millions to deny God's true law, the Catholic Church have usurped many peoples prayers, leaving them in a position where God cannot bless them. The Devil has led multitudes astray, and is ready to answer their prayers so they will think God has blessed their path and that they follow the true religion.

The Candlestick
(Symbolising God's church and the Holy Spirit)

The condition people must meet in order for the Spirit to be poured out upon them is obedience to God's Ten Commandments; "the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). By changing God's commandments the antichrist is preventing people of partaking in this blessing.

The Table of Shewbread
(Gods word, the Bible)
From it's inception the Catholic Church has tampered with the word of God and has added several uninspired books to Scripture. They have also spread disbelief by endorsing evolution. During the Middle Ages the Catholic Church forbade the common people to own or even read a Bible, and anyone who copied and distributed it suffered persecution from the Church.

The High Priest (Jesus)

According to the Bible, Christ is the only High Priest in the new covenant, and the only One authorised to mediate between man and God. The Catholic Church permits many mediators, and encourages people to pray to Mary, saints and even priests so they can take their prayers to the throne of God.

Laver
When you have received Christ as your Saviour you are baptised into the faith. Paul says baptism is a matter of conscience. By doing away with adult babtism and replacing it with infant baptism, the antichrist has succeded in preventing adults to receive baptism, thus missing out on such a beautiful symbolic service and the blessing gained in following God's ordinations. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

The Sacrifice
The Bible only offers forgivness through the sacrifice and blood of Christ. The Catholic Church however permits the atoning of sins through pilgrimages and prayer recitals.

666

Today the number 666 is often used by satanists and rock stars as a symbol of Satan. This probably due to the number 666 being used in the Bible in reference to the Antichrist, but the number 666 has a mythological origin from ancient times. The number 666 originated in ancient sun worship. The number represents the sun and therefore also the serpent (the Devil) power. The representative of the sun god took upon himself the name of the sun god and his number. The Bible tells us the number is "the number of a man" (Rev 13:18).

It is not Satanism that God is warning us of here, as satanists fully understand the true identity of whom they worship. What abhors God is when the Devil disguises himself in order to deceive. Therefore God lovingly wants to expose the man who carries the number of the sun god, and who is the Devil's agent to destroy God's people.

Below we see old Roman medallions incorporating the Babylonian numbers of the zodiac. 1-36 with the number 666 below. The numbers 1-36 are not placed in order, but in a way that each row adds up to 111. The sun is depicted on the front of the coin.

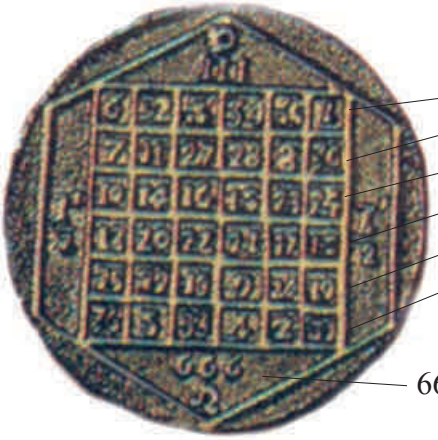
The Babylonian solar wheel had six houses through which the sun moved during the day, and six houses through which it traveled during the night, totaling 12 houses. In each house were three rooms all containing a different god, totaling 36 rooms and 36 gods. The zodiac was a symbol of the Mys-

tery God. When the number of every room was added up the sum total was the number of the Supreme God.

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9 + 10 + 11 + 12 + 13 + 14 + 15 + 16 + 17 + 18 + 19 + 20 + 21 + 22 + 23 + 24 + 25 + 26 + 27 + 28 + 29 + 30 + 31 + 32 + 33 + 34 + 35 + 36

Therefore the number 666 was given to the sun or the sun god, which was considered the Supreme God.

Berosses was a Babylonian priest (for Bel/Mardok) in approximately the 3rd century BC. He authoured three books in Greek about Babylonian history and culture. His works have been lost but we know about them through the great historians like Alexander Polyhistor and Joseph ben Matthias (Josephus) and Eusebius. Stories regarding this Babylonian priest speak of how he started a school of astrology among the Greeks.



Old Roman coins showing the number of the sun religion, with the numbers 1 to 36 and the number 666 below.

Many agree that it was through the Greek empire that the Babylonian teachings were transferred to the Roman empire and her religion.

Apart from the historical origins of the number 666 identifying it with the sun god, we are told from the Bible that we can count the number of the beast's name. Even though some other names can be added up to 666, the beast has to fit every characteristic in the Bible that identifies her. It is the Catholic Church alone that fits every, single identifying characteristic of the antichrist.

In the Bible we learn that to God, titles and names are considered one and the same thing (Isaiah 9:6).

"One of the titles of the pope and which is written on the pope`s mitre, is VICARIUS FILII DEI" (Our Sunday Visitor, 18th April, 1915).

The letters inscribed in the Pope's mitre are these: *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which is the Latin for Vicar of the Son of God. Catho-

The article from “Our Sunday Visitor”.

V = 5
I = 1
C = 100
A = 0
R = 0
I = 1
U = 5
S = 0

F = 0
I = 1
L= 50
I= 1
I= 1

D = 500
E = 0
I = 1

Total = 666

The Latin letters in the name are also Roman numerals. It is the value of these numbers that is added up. U and V hold the same value.

You can do this in the Latin, in the Hebrew, or in the Greek. It will all add up to the same - 666.

The holy door leading to St Peter's Basilica displays 6 emblems, 3 times for each door; 6-6-6. Just as it was pictured on the Roman medallion, there is 36 emblems altogether, which added together totals 666. The number 666 is therefore represented 3 times by the symbols on this door. Only the pope is allowed to open this door once every Jubilee Year.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

To understand what the "mark of the beast" is, we shall go back and take a closer look at Satan's war against God. The last rebellion before Christ's return is similar to that which took place in the beginning, when sin first entered this planet. The end of sin on this planet, will be just like it's beginning. The conflict is the same and Satan's methods and intentions are the same. Essentially, Satan wishes to prevent as many people as possible from entering the kingdom of God. His main objective is not only to hinder what is right, but to be worshipped as if he is God himself. This was his first battle against God when he tried to take control of heaven, but failed.

Satan's war against God in heaven was over the following issues:
1) He wanted God's position
2) He opposed God's law.

As he tempted the first man and woman, he continued in these very same pursuits. His tactics were:

1) To make man obey his will instead of God's. (He succeeded with this when he made Eve believe the words of the serpent over and above God's instruction, and so he became Eve's authority. This is how he tried to usurp God's position).

2) To make them break at least one of God's commandments. (To eat of the

forbidden fruit. He was in rebellion against God's law).

When the Creator informed man about a plan which would provide him with a chance to return to God and to His kingdom, Satan persisted in the same battle:

1) To make man continue to render obedience to him over and above God, thus usurping the very position God had in their lives.

2) Christ said, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). Satan determind to hinder man from his right to eat from "the tree of life". The only way to do this was to make man continue to rebel against God's law, instead of regretting his transgression of the law and obtaining forgiveness and sanctification through the blood of Christ.

Satan would never have succeeded in these two pursuits had he openly presented himself as the Devil. His selfish ambition and hunger for the destruction of human life would have found few followers, and most would undoubtably have followed God. Satan therefore chose not to reveal his true identity in the Garden of Eden, during his attempt to deceive the first man and woman into obeying him; and it is exactly the same today.

Satan has no compassion for those who are faithful to him, and he uses them as worthless instruments in the process of attacking God. God cares deeply for the people Satan deceives, and Satan knows this. Satan holds fast even now to the same two fundamental goals mentioned above, and we must never forget that, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" in order to fulfil his goals (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Sun worship became Satan's cloak, and through this 666 religion he sought to be worshipped as the creator (point 1) and to make man continue to oppose God's law (point 2). As Christianity spread, it reached the hearts of his most faithful sun worshippers, yet in spite of the thousands of Christians that were martyred, the number of Christians continued to grow. Satan was losing his grip on the multitudes now that Christianity was flourishing, and more and more people were keeping God's law. His only alternative was to now clothe sun worship in a Christian cloak. If man chose to obey him, it certainly didn't matter if they used Christ's name to do it. It was simply an abuse of Christ's name, and

he would still succeed in preventing them access to the kingdom of God, just as long as they opposed God's law. All the while it was Satan that was being worshipped as man was still being obedient to him. Under the cloak of Christianity, Satan has succeeded in deceiving millions into bowing down on their knees to Christ-like images, but with the halo of the sun god around the head of the image. Furthermore, the day that God has set aside as a sign of who man worships as the Creator, has been replaced by the day of the sun god.

The key

Paul, a prophet of Christ, said, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" (Romans 6:16). This one scripture is the key to understanding what "the mark of the beast" is. We are servants to whom we obey.

Mankind has been warned not to, "receive a mark [of the beast] in their right hand, or in their foreheads" (Revelation 13:16). In the same way that the "beast" is not a literal beast, the mark is not a literal mark. The hand represents our works, and the forehead represents the choices we make in our minds. Men will therefore be forced to make a choice, and confirm this choice by their works.

Our obedience is therefore the mark of who we worship. When Eve obeyed the serpent in the Garden of Eden, she made a decision which exalted his authority above God's. In doing so she placed the serpent above God in her mind, and confirmed the decision by her works, thus Satan succeeded in his two goals defined earlier. Satan was placed above God in the human mind, and mankind broke the law and lost his right to the tree of life.

In sun worship, the sun god's day was called "The Lord's Day" just as the Sabbath was called "The Lord's Day" by the Jews and early Christians. There were two "lords", a false and a true; two "creators", a false and a true; two "life givers" a false and a true. We are now faced with a choice between two christ's, a false and a true, and each have two different laws. Although many claim they worship the true Lord and God, it is actually the ideology and the law-giver they obey, that determines who they have actually given their loyalty to. For the prophet said, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" (Romans 6:16).

The first contradiction between the two laws is that one law forbids the worship

of graven images, while the other permits it. The other difference is regarding the fourth commandment, the very commandment God said was to "be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God." (Ezekiel 20:20). The other law requires the observance of Sunday, the day of the 666 sun god.

To simply use the name of Christ in one's worship is useless if the ideology itself declares that God's law can be broken, and instead exalts man's commandments. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:21-23).

The mark of the beast

The mark of the beast is placed upon those that keep the commandments of the beast.

The Catholic Church claims,
QUESTION: "Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?
ANSWER: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." (PETER GEIERMANN, "The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine" Second Edition, 1910, page 50.)

QUESTION: "Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?
ANSWER: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority." (STEPHEN KEENAN, "A Doctrinal Catechism" page 174.)

QUESTION: "How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holydays?
ANSWER: By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keep-

ing Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same Church.

QUESTION: How prove you that?
ANSWER: Because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the Church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin and by not keeping the rest [of the feasts] by her commanded, they again deny, in fact, the same power." (HENRY TUBERVILLE, D. D., "An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine" (R. C.), page 58.)

"Sunday is our mark of authority. The church is above the Bible, and this transference of sabbath observance is proof of that fact." (The Catholic Record, London, Ontario, September 1, 1923.)

"Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change [of the sabbath to Sunday] was her act. It could not have been otherwise... And the act is a MARK of ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." (James Cardinal Gibbons, in a letter to J. F. Snyder of Bloomington, Illinois, dated November 11, 1895, and signed by H. F. Thomas, Chancellor for the Cardinal.) [Emphasis mine].

Furthermore the Catholic Church claims, "Protestants... accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the change... But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that in accepting the Bible, in observing the Sunday, they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope." (Our Sunday Visitor, 5th Feb. 1950. This magazine is the most popular Catholic magazine in the USA).

"It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and all other Christians, that the Bible does not support them anywhere in their observance of Sunday. Sunday is an institution of the Roman Catholic Church, and those who observe the day observe a commandment of the Catholic Church." (Priest Brady, at a lecture in N.J, USA, 17th March, 1903).

"It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest [from the Bible Sabbath] to the Sunday... Thus the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] Church." (Monsignor Louis Segur, Plain Talk About

the Protestantism of Today, 1868, p.213).

"And they worshipped the dragon [Satan] which gave power unto the beast." (Revelation 13:4).

As Paul said, we are servants to whom we obey. If we choose to follow the pope's version of the law, we are accepting his authority above and beyond the word of God. In doing so, we place the authority of a mortal and sinful man above that of Christ and His unadulterated word which offers us eternal life. We all must decide if we want to follow Pontifex Maximus, 666, who has the "power of the serpent", or if we want to follow Messiah.

The title of the Creator

The mark of the beast, which man must avoid receiving in the forehead (his mind) or in the right hand (his works), is to obey the counterfeit law of the beast, but only after we have all received knowledge of the truth. By showing faithfulness to this law that has been altered, we render obedience to he who made that law. Unavoidably, the consequences of keeping the beast's law will automatically be the transgression of God's law, particularly the Sabbath commandment.

It is no coincidence that the Sabbath commandment will become the greatest test of obedience. The Sabbath commandment is the only commandment which reveals;

1) The name of the Law Maker ("The LORD" or "I AM" – Exodus 20:10)
2) His title ("The LORD thy God" The Creator - Exodus 20:10)
3) His territory, under His reign ("The LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is" - Exodus 20:11)

It was these very titles, The Creator of the world and The Lord of the Universe, that Satan wished to have, and which he succeeded in usurping through the name of the "666 sun god" and "the day of the sun god". As Satan said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isaiah 14:13). Since the Sabbath honours God as the Creator, Satan wanted to destroy the significance of this commandment, by changing it, so that he would be honoured instead. Through his counterfeit Christianity, Satan will try to accomplish his two-point plan. Let us look at it again:

1) He wants to be worshipped as if he were God (he wanted to have God's position. Since the Sabbath was a sign identifying the Creator, when the people choose the sabbath of the sun god, he is honoured as creator).

2) Christ says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). Satan wanted to deny man his right to "the tree of life". The only way to prevent people from accessing the kingdom of heaven, was to make them continue in opposing God's law. (By keeping the sabbath of the sun god the people actually break the first, third and fourth commandment).

Through the Catholic Church, man will exalt Satan above God, when he renders obedience to him over God. In doing so, he will break God's commandments, thus Satan has also succeeded in making man oppose God's law willingly, and lose eternal life.

The seal of God

There is more than one reason for Satan's attack on the fourth commandment. When we understand the significance of the fourth commandment, we understand why Satan has chosen to attack this very commandment. The forth commandment is God's seal in His law; it identifies who God is and that it is He who has written the "contract", or the "covenant". If this part of the commandment is removed, Satan has succeeded in removing that part which identifies the Law Giver. By creating a counterfeit law, Satan has rid "the seal of God" from the contract and added his own seal, or "mark". So we are left with a covenant that is not legally valid in our time or indeed, any previous time. By changing the fourth commandment, Satan has removed God's seal, or endorsement, and thus tried to invalidate the contract. Satan's counterfeit law is not the covenant that was confirmed. Although he may try, Satan can never alter, or make void the true covenant which lies in the Ark of the Covenant, nor can he change the law in the Ark in heaven. All he can do is deceive us into believing the law is now done away with, or changed, and make us accept the day of the 666 sun god, above that of the Creator's day. What choice we make, will determine who we accept as our lawgiver.

The characteristics of God's children

Just as the Bible gives identifying characteristics as to who the beast is, it also identifies those who refuse the mark of the beast, "they that keep the command-

ments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12). So the mark of the beast must either be breaking God's commandments, or rejecting the faith of Jesus, and that is exactly what the Catholic Church claims is the "mark" of their authority! The change of God's Sabbath to Sunday is a transgression of God's law and a rejection of Christ as our only Mediator and Law Giver. Christ said that until heaven and earth pass, "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law", and that the "scripture cannot be broken" (Matthew 5:18, John 10:35). Jesus also said, If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not" (John 10:32). The pope's alteration of the fourth commandment makes a mockery of Christ's words, and of God's authority.

Christ specifically warned us, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" and, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Mark 7:7, James 2:10).

"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator…" (Romans 1:25).

So is everyone within these false Christian churches now lost? No! The Book of Revelation is given for the very purpose of calling the deceived and yet sincere people out of this system which will only lead to perdition. This is why Christ is revealing all this to us now. He wants to save deceived souls. Therefore He sends us the message, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4). By this last message to mankind, God has warned us that many of His sincere children are deceived. A special message is to be proclaimed to them "with a loud voice" in the last days, so they have the opportunity to answer the call to "come out of" the deception, and be saved.

Even though many will leave the false religious system, the majority will choose faithfulness towards man and the commandments of men. It is written, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [the beast], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb" (Revelation 13:8). We can now see how this prophecy is gradually being fulfilled. The Vatican has political and religious leaders in their service all over the world. Despite the bloodied hands of the papacy, the world today looks upon the church as a worker for peace.

Excuses used to break the fourth commandment

Many Christians, especially Protestants, claim they keep Sunday sacred in memory of Christ's resurrection, but is this a deception? If Jesus did not come to remove the law, how then can we by any means believe we can remove it? The Bible, the very word of God, says, "…all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172). According to the Scripture therefore, the Sabbath commandment is "righteous". The Sabbath is God's mark of authority; Gods seal. Who are we to change God's seal? Is it not mocking God to try and change the sign that He is the Creator of the world, and so placing ourselves above God? Christ's resurrection was indeed to be remembered in a special way, but not by breaking God's commandments! Christ came and fulfilled, or kept, the whole law, and now we are to honour this by breaking it? "If ye love Me," said Jesus, "keep My commandments." (John 14:15).

Jesus did not come to establish a new law, but to fulfil God's law. He did not come to present any new doctrine, but to reveal to man the eternal character of God. He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true... the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape... I am come in my Father's name... For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:30-47). It was baptism that was given to us as a memorial of Christ's resurrection (Romans 6:1-5). The memorial of Christ's death was to be the Lord's Supper.

Jesus instructed His disciples concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and how to survive it. He warned them, "…pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day" (Matthew 24:20). The disciples were still to look upon the Sabbath as holy even after the resurrection of Christ. If we read in Acts, we find that the disciples and Paul kept the Sabbath both among Jews and gentiles, even in gentile countries. Even gentiles that had become Christians kept the Sabbath (Acts 13:42-44; 16:11-14; 17:2).

"The primitive Christians had a great veneration for the Sabbath, and spent the

day in devotion and sermons. And it is not to be doubted that they derived this practice from the Apostles themselves, as appears by several scriptures to that purpose." (Dialogues on the Lord's day," page.189. London 1761, by Dr. T. H. Morer).

2nd century Christians: "The Gentile Christians observed also the Sabbath." (Gieseler's "Church History," Volume I, chapter 2, par.30, page 83).

"The primitive Christians did keep the Sabbath of the Jews; ...therefore the Christians, for a long time together, did keep their conventions upon the Sabbath in which some portions of the law were read: and this continued till the time of the Laodicean Council." ("The Whole Works" of Jeremy Taylor Volume IX, page 416 (R. Heber's Edition. Volume XII, page 416).

"The seventh-day Sabbath was... solemnised by Christ, the Apostles, and primitive Christians, till the Laodicean Council did in a manner quite abolish the observations of it." (Dissertation on the Lord's day," pages 33, 34, 44; The Sabbath of Jesus Christ Through the Ages, Coltheart page 9-11)

Many claim that the Sabbath was solely given to the Jews, but the scripture says, "Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" (Malachi 2:9-10). "Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people... Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain" (Isaiah 56:3-6).

The Sabbath was given to all men at the creation (Exodus 20:8 and Genesis 2:3). Throughout the Bible, and in the fourth commandment, we are told it is the Lord's Day, "…the sabbath of the LORD thy God" (Exodus 20:10). Isaiah prophesied that all gentiles who keep the Sabbath were to be called God's children and be blessed. "For there is no respect of persons with God", "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." (Romans 2:11 & 10:12). The Sabbath is the Creator's gift to His creation, and we are all His creation, "With righteousness

shall he judge the world, and the people with equity." (Psalm 98:9).

The Sabbath was holy from the very beginning, and shall be holy also on the new earth. We shall keep it as He bids us in His commandment. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD." (Isaiah 66:22-23).

The condition

There are two conditions which people must meet in order to gain access to the universe:

1. They must acknowledge the guilt of their sin, and ask for forgiveness and freely accept Christ's death to cleanse them of all sin.
2. They must now stop opposing God's law.

If the law became invalid by Christ's death, there would not have been any sinners from the time of Jesus until now. Not one, because, "sin is the transgression of the law", and if there is no law enforced, it is impossible to break it, thus it is impossible to sin. So if anyone tells you, "the law and the fourth commandment is done away with" in effect they are saying they have not sinned. Only if there is a law enforced, and they have violated it, then they have broken the law and sinned. If anyone tells you the fourth commandment, the Sabbath commandment, is done away with, then they are in effect saying that it is not a sin to break one of God's commandments. If so, they will not feel the need to acknowledge and confess their sin, and so forgiveness cannot be granted to them. If man refuses to admit he has violated God's law, he is opposing God's law. If man has not given every sin to Christ and asked for forgiveness, then he will be lost.

Back to the garden of Eden.

This was the scene of the fall of mankind. Satan planted doubts regarding the LORD'S command when questioning Eve, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" When Eve confirmed that God had said they were not to eat of one particular tree, and then explained the consequences if they did eat of it, the serpent continued in his deception, "Ye shall not surely die". Satan claimed that eternal life would still be theirs, even if they broke the commandment, and with such a claim, reduced God's commandments to nought. Satan

offered Eve a religion that promised everlasting life even if she broke the law. Eve doubted the LORD's words, and chose to believe the serpent. Thus Satan succeeded in planting doubts in her mind regarding God's warning if she were to break the law. Eve believed the created being over the Creator, thus today we are a mortal race. But take note, the first deception will also be the last. People in the last days, with the help of Christ, will have the opportunity to gain the victory, where man was first defeated.

We no longer need to test God's word, in order to know if His commandments are for the benefit of mankind. Let us not repeat that mistake, as now we have seen what disobedience against God leads to; murder, rape, Satanism, genocide, disease, terrorism, incest; a world of chaos and people in the worst physical, mental and spiritual condition. Just as there were many trees in the garden Eve could have eaten from, we too have six days in which we can work. Just as God set aside one tree He forbade them to eat from, He has set one day aside to be holy. Eve was not granted the prerogative to choose which of the trees she was forbidden to eat from. As with the tree, the Sabbath day signifies faithfulness and obedience to God. If we believe God, we will show Him faithfulness, but if we believe man, then we will show obedience to him. Jesus has already warned us, "in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7). When we have been enlightened with the truth and still choose to follow the doctrines of men, we are rejecting Christ's words and in doing so, reject Christ Himself. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:4).

The mark of the beast enforced

From the Book of Revelation we know, "the mark of the beast" will be enforced throughout the world, and that a certain power will make it happen so "that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:17). It is further prophesied that those who "would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." (Revelation 13:15).

The Catholic Church says, "The Catholic has some reason on his side when he calls for the temporal punishment of heretics, for he claims the true title of Christian for himself exclusively, and professes to be taught by the never-failing presence of the Spirit of God... It is not more 'morally' wrong to put a man to death for heresy than for murder... [and] in many cases persecution for

religious opinions is not only permissible, but highly advisable and necessary." (The Lawfulness of Persecution, in "The Rambler", 4th June 1849, pages 119 & 126).

"You ask if he [the Roman Catholic] were lord in the land, and you where in a minority, if not in numbers yet in power, what would he do to you? That, we say, would entirely depend upon circumstances. If it would benefit the cause of Catholicism, he would tolerate you: If expedient, he would imprison you, banish you, fine you; possibly, he might even hang you. But be assured of one thing: He would never tolerate you for the sake of 'the glorious principles of civil and religious liberty'... Catholicism is not the most intolerant of creeds. It is intolerance itself, for it is truth itself." (From the Article "Civil and Religious Liberty" published in "The Rambler", 8th September 1851 p.174,178. ["The Rambler" was an English Roman Catholic journal published from 1848 to 1862].)

"A 26 page report made public in September by "The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith" and approved by the pope, shocked several religious leaders. "Dominus Jesus", as the document is called, says that the tendency among modern Christians to view all religions with equal worth, is not in harmony with the Catholic faith. The Catholic Church claim that they are the only true church, and that salvation can only be attained through them. 73 leading theologins from fifteen different countries have publicly opposed the letter, feeling it contradicts the 2nd Vatican Council. The council that ended in 1965, with its liberation of the Church, has opened the way for a closer relationship between the papacy and other denominations. The result of this was seen last year when the Lutheran-Catholic Common Declaration of Doctrines of Faith was signed in the city of Augsburg, on the 31st of October, 1999, precisely 400 years after Martin Luther had publicly posted his 95 thesis. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, led by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, is the former Office of the Inquisition. The Inquisition, since it was instituted in the year 1200AD, killed at least 68 million Christians that refused to obey the authority of the Catholic Church. Originally this fearful institution was led by the Dominican Monks, but later the Jesuits took over. Around 1550 the Jesuits began infiltrating other religions and churches. Today they work in a more sophisticated manner, through the ecumenical and charismatic movement, among other things." ("Obadiah" (Norwegian magazine) No.7, October 2000, page 17).

ANOTHER BEAST COMING UP OUT OF THE EARTH

The Book of Revelation speaks of yet another kingdom; a power described as "another beast coming up out of the earth". This power will play a major role in the last conflict on earth. It is not the papacy that will actually "enforce" the mark of the beast. Revelation 13 tells us that this other, newer power, "exerciseth all the power of the first beast", and that it will use it's power to force man to keep the counterfeit law, the law of the papacy. It says he "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast" (Revelation 13:12). It is this power that will ensure, "that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:17).

So who is this beast in Revelation 13 that will enforce laws regarding Sunday sacredness?

"The great kingdoms that have ruled the world were presented to the prophet Daniel as beasts of prey, rising when "the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea." (Daniel 7:2). In Revelation 17 an angel explained that waters represent "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Revelation 17:15. Winds are a symbol of strife. The four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea represent the terrible scenes of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power.

But the beast with lamb-like horns was seen "coming up out of the earth." Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus repre-

sented must arise in territory preciously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully. It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World--that turbulent sea of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." It must be sought in the Western Continent.

What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America." (Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy page 440).

The same country is described in the 12th chapter of Revelation, but is there described as the land where God's people fled to at the end of the 1260 year long persecution. "And the earth helped the woman [the church]" (Revelation 12:16). The ship, "The Mayflower" was the first of several ships that were to carry hundreds of people across the ocean from Europe to the new country in the west. Anabaptists, Quakers, Jews, Sabbath keepers and all other denominations were among those who sought the freedom to practice their faith in this new country. Centuries of murder and persecution were left behind, persecution they had been exposed to solely because of their wish to practice a faith different to that of the Catholic Church. Many of these Christians were the remnants of the church in the wilderness which in the Middle Ages sought refuge in the mountainous areas of Europe.

The country where Protestants once fled to, to avoid the tyranny of the papacy in the Dark Ages, will soon turn and honour the papacy and assist in her pursuits. In theory, the United States is still a Protestant country. "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." (Revelation 13:11-15).

In the 19th chapter and 20th verse of Revelation, the Bible describes the same power again, but now refers to it as, "the false prophet". "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." The false prophet is the religious movement that will pressurise their government, the government of the United States of America, into making, "the image of the beast" and persecute those who refuse the mark of the beast. Just as the papacy has done in times past, "the false prophet" needs help from the state to enforce their religious doctrine.

The fallen Protestant churches will unite with the Catholic Church, and with the support of the governments of the world, will persecute those who refuse the mark of the beast. Once again the world will witness Christians persecuted because they choose to keep God's true commandments, and refuse to submit to man, making man the mediator instead of Christ. Once again, those who persecute them, do so in the name of Jesus. So that the persecutors' profession of faith will not confuse us, Jesus has told us, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21).

Furthermore, the prophesy in Revelation 13:16-17 says, "And he (the beast coming up from the earth) causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Those who refuse to submit to the counterfeit divinity, and actively obey this power, knowing it is Satan who is honoured through it, will suffer persecution. Once again, history will repeat itself.

The Catholic Church already looks upon those who do not honour Sunday as rebels. Reporting in "The New York Times" regarding the Pope's 1998 letter, "Deis Domini", encouraging people to appeal to their governments to enforce Sunday observance, the Pope said, "violators will be punished as heretics". That the world's tragedies are a result of the neglect of Sunday observance, is being insinuated through various media, (eg. "Prophesy and the New Times", 1997 by Ted Flynn). If this propaganda continues, then those uplifting the sacredness of Sunday will be looked upon as the peacemakers, while those resisting will be

looked upon as rebels, and will be held in contempt.

"The Catholic Twin Circle" 1985, August 25th, wrote in the article, "Sacking Sunday", "All Americans would do well to petition the president and the Congress to make a federal law - an amendment to the constitution if need be - to re-establish the Sabbath [meaning Sunday] as a national day of rest".

"During nearly all of our American history the churches have influenced the States to make and improve Sabbath laws." (W. F. Crafts, in Christian Statesman, p.5 [official publication of the National Reform Association] "This organization proposes in every possible way to aid in preserving Sunday as a civil institution. Our national security requires the active support of all good citizens in the maintenance of our "American¨Sabbath.¨ Sunday laws must be enacted and enforced." (Quoted as "Principles contained in the Constitution of the original organization" of the Lord`s Day Alliance [formerly called the American Sabbath Union] in its Twenty-fifth Report, p.6; Mark of the Beast, p.46).

The following methods have been used by the Catholic Church in times past, to force people to honour the day of the sun, "There is a class of people in this country who will not keep the Christian Sabbath [Sunday] unless they are forced to do so; but this can easily be done... If we would say we will not sell anything to them, we will not buy anything from them, we will not work for them or hire them to work for us, the thing could be wiped out, and all the world would keep the Christian Sabbath. [meaning Sunday]" (Dr. Bascom Robins in an article in, "The Decalogue", Burlington, Kansas, January 1904).

"Business can easily be put in its place, if you Christian people want to put it there... If you would boycott them, not only on Sunday but also during the week, they would have to quit their desecration of the Lord's day, or go out of business... It is up to you to put stigma of public censure on Sunday business." (Peter Eldersveld, radio broadcast, Back to God Hour, March, 1955, and printed in a pamphlet, "Save Our Sunday." ["Stigma" means "mark"].

The false prophet

However, the USA is not a Catholic country, so how exactly will she join with the Papacy in Satan's attack against God? Who is "the false prophet" that will woo the USA into making an image of the beast, and enforce the mark of the beast? It is a religious power that will use "signs and wonders" to make the

world join in making an image of the beast (Revelation 13, 14, 19 & 20). After the mark of the beast law is passed, under the plagues of Revelation, the three leading powers are again mentioned, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." (Revelation 16:13-14).

The three powers are:
1) The dragon (Satan, Revelation 12:9)
2) The beast (The Papacy)
3) The false prophet (An American movement)

In order to understand the role the USA will play, we need an understanding of the largest and most influential movement of Christianity within the USA today; the "Charismatic Movement", a movement that has more prophets than any other. Many of these prophets preach "peace and safety" and it is also these Protestant churches that are pushing to enforce such religious laws in America. Protestants once defended the basic human right to freely follow one's own religious conviction without persecution. When Protestant churches abandon this principle and seek to enforce religion by law, they create a copy of the Catholic Church, and become like the Church in its structure and methods, thus they make an "image" of the beast.

Concerning this power that, "came out of the earth" Revelation13:14 says, "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live". And that, "…he exerciseth all the power of the first beast (The Papacy) before him" (Revelation 13:12). Presently, the Catholic Church does not have the political power to force their religious beliefs upon the world, as she did in the Middle Ages. It was during this time when she did posses such power, that millions of Christians were tortured and killed because they refused to submit to the teachings of the Church.

Today the Catholic Church cannot carry out their ideology enforcing religious laws with the death penalty. Therefore it is this new power (the USA), who

will “give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Revelation 13:15). In the Bible, to “give life” means to give life to something that is dead. The Catholic Churches political power to enforce religious doctrine, has been dead since 1798, when she “received a deadly wound”. It was prophesied that “the deadly wound was healed” and it is this new power, the USA, that will “give life” to this form of forced religion that the Catholic Church once practiced. “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” (Revelation 13:14).

When the image of the beast has been fully formed, it is the Catholic Church who will be honoured, because the image is built on the structure and beliefs of the papacy. And likewise, it is the “dragon”, who is honoured, as it is he who is behind this form of Christianity. The Protestant churches will not actually convert to Catholicism, but they will have honoured her with their “foreheads” (mind, belief or conscience) and their “hands” (their works). Thus, when they force others to comply, they will have enforced, “The Mark of the Beast”.

The Bible calls this power, “the false prophet”, and by investigating the scriptures, we begin to understand who and what “a false prophet is”. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing (See Revelation 13:11), but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. (See 1 John 2:3-4, 5:2-3 & Isaiah 8:20). “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” (Matthew 7:15-23).

(*Anomia, comes from the greek word “nomos”, which means law. A-nomia means violation of law)

The Bible has given us the following identifying characteristics of the false prophet, or the apostate Protestant churches:
- Does miracles in Christ's name (Matthew 7:22)
- Casts out demons in Christ's name (Matthew 7:22)
- Declares different "wonderful works" in Christ's name (Matthew 7:22)
- Iniquity* – Sin, or transgression of the law (Matthew 7:23 & 1 John 2:4)
- Falsely anointing with another spirit (2 Corinthians 11:4)
- Signs and wonders (Revelation 19:20 & Revelation 13:14)
- False teachers (1 Timothy 1:7 & 2 Peter 2:1)
- False apostles (2 Corinthians 11:13)
- Teach that Christ did not come by flesh (1 John 4:1-2)
- Present false christs (Matthew 24:24 & 2 Corinthians 11:4)
- Present a false gospel (2 Corinthians 11:4 & Galatians 1:6-9)

These clues are important for our understanding of what a false Protestant church, or a false prophet is. The Bible prophesies that they will use, "signs and wonders" in order to encourage people to join with them in making an image of the beast. If we gather all the above clues together, we see how these "false prophet" churches appear:
The church claims it is Christian, and presents an "anointing of the spirit" in a way never before done. It presents a christ, or several christs, and has a doctrine that is not in harmony with scripture, and a gospel different to that which Christ gave. They perform "signs and wonders" but live in "iniquity" (live without God's law). These very characteristics can be found in the religious movement in the USA today. A movement urging religious laws (commandments of men). Already we see prestigious leaders performing before thousands of people, casting the "spirit" upon the audience, and watching in amazement as they fall to the ground, and lie shaking or laughing or crying. Miracles, signs and wonders are all present. Man is exalted, and all is done in the name of Jesus. One of the most popular charismatic leaders has told millions of followers that Christ will soon appear at his meetings. The more signs and wonders that are promised, the more determined the people become to "Christianize" their nation, in line with their religious convictions. They feel these signs and wonders are evidence that God is with them, and they demand that the country repent, and appeal for more

pressure from the government to fulfil their end. But these churches do not possess the sign proving it is "the LORD that sanctify them" (Ezekiel 20:12), or that the LORD is their God (Ezekiel 20:20). They have exalted the laws of men above God's law, the commandments of men above the commandments of God. They follow the law of the sun god, and not of the Creator.

It is the religious movement of the USA who will, together with the State, make an image of the beast. "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (Revelation 13:13 & 14). Why fire? The Bible has prophesied the following things will happen in the last days, "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke" (Joel 2:30). By using signs such as, "fire come down from heaven", they will try to convince people that the signs they perform are those that have already been prophesied in the word of God. Since the Bible tells us that both God, and the power which will enforce the Mark of the Beast will use signs such as "fire from heaven" it is important therefore not to base our beliefs on such signs, but rather base are beliefs on the fruits of the signs. Therefore Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:15-16) "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3-4). "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20). By these standards we can know whether the signs are from God, or the work of demons.

When Moses was asked to go to Egypt and deliver the Israelites from captivity, God gave him various signs that he was to perform before Pharaoh and the people. His staff was transformed into a snake, water turned to blood, and other such miracles. It says, "Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments." (Exodus 7:11). The only way the people could know if it was God inspiring the signs, was by looking at the profession and teachings of those performing them. Knowing there will be many signs and wonders from both God and the Devil in the last conflict, these things are important for us to understand.

Many think that church leaders can always be trusted, and that they are always able to judge what is of God's Spirit and what is a deception. But there is nothing so dangerous as putting trust in man, so that we ourselves neglect the study of God's word. Paul warned us against, "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:13).

When we read the history of the enemies of God's prophets, we see just how far they were willing to go. They stirred up the multitudes to reject God's truth, and just as it is today, a "Thus saith the LORD", was often used so people believed that these men were the Lord's spokesmen (Ezekiel 13:7). Ezekiel writes, "Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house… and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men… princes of the people. Then said He (The LORD) unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city" (Ezekiel 11:1-2).

There are many who believe God does not permit evil servants to enter the churches, hidden under a cloak of righteousness so they can win the highest positions, but the Bible tells us otherwise, and reveals why God allows it, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5:31) "…by your lying to my people that hear your lies" (Ezekiel 13:19) In the New Testament we read, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Timothy 4:3). Not only that, but the Lord says, "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard" (Jeremiah 12:10).

"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm" and "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is." (Jeremiah 17:5-7). Many of the leaders, working their way to the top, find fulfilment in the admiration they acquire, but God has warned us never to admire man, but to look to Him only. Many seeking high positions within the church can appear humble in their exterior, but lack an inner humility, and very often, this becomes their stumbling block. Satan gains control of them through their pride, as well as those who put their trust in them.

The Book of Revelation explains that, "the mouth of the false prophet" is inspired by, "the spirits of devils, working miracles" (Revelation 16:13&14).

Galatians 1:7, Matthew 7:21-23 and 2 Corinthians 11:12-15 tell us that Satan uses Christianity so-called, and the name of Christ to win people to his ideology. Therefore, it is just as important to warn people against false Christianity as it is to warn them even against Satanism, as Satan is behind both.

Satan wins people by preaching a false gospel, and making Christ's mission appear to be his own. In order to deceive, he presents concepts in a way that is easily digestible, often in the form of entertainment. When Satan has caught them in his snare, he makes them believe it is dangerous to listen to other Christian interpretations. Thus the multitudes are trapped in Satan's net of false Christianity, by preaching smooth and popular doctrines. The more the worship is influenced by worldliness, the more success this form of false Christianity enjoys. Satan knows how millions love rock concerts because of the excitement, adrenaline, and the self-hypnosis they experience. By creating the same atmosphere in the churches, he gathers thousands to listen. Satan's ideology presented in Christ's name is of no benefit, and cannot save anyone. Just as it is the "spirits of devils… come out of the mouth of the… false prophet", the Bible also tells us it is the "doctrines of devils" (Revelation 16:13&14, see also 1 Timothy 4:1).

If we do not thoroughly understand the doctrines of God, how can we possibly recognize the, "doctrines of devils"? Remember, Satan used the Bible in his attempt to deceive and tempt Christ when He was on earth, but Christ knew Scripture and was never overcome. Christ also said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures". The Bible warns us that Satan will use, "all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9), and those who are deceived are described as those who, "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

If we only assess a persons outward words and actions in order to determine whether something is of God or not, then the Bible clearly warns us that we will be deceived. Jesus exposed some of the signs and wonders that Satan will make use of in his version of Christianity. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus speaks of people prophesying in His name, casting out devils in His name and doing many wonderful things in His name, but He warns us that they do not truly represent Him because they have rejected the truth and God's law. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Jesus warns us that we cannot decide for ourselves what is truth, and then call it Christianity. "In

vain do they worship Me", He said concerning those who attempt this (Mark 7:7).

The name of Jesus is abused every time it is used without a true understanding of the Man and His teaching. The name "Jesus" itself cannot offer salvation to anyone, only the power belonging to that Man's name can; His life, His death, His character, and His truth. Jesus once said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" and " the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him", further on He said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17, 4:23 & 17:3). If we do not have knowledge of God and His word, neither do we know Jesus, and will eventually represent Him wrongfully and abuse His name. "And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely. O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth?" (Jeremiah 5:2-3).

Millions of Christians are already deceived. It has become a heavy and sometimes almost impossible task to reach them since they refuse to realise how they worship a false christ, nor do they feel any need or interest in getting to know the true Christ.

Those who have been deceived and do not search to see if their understanding harmonises with God's word, will be lost if they do not turn to God's truth. "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed" (Isaiah 9:16). Those who choose to listen to those preachers "having itching ears", will perish together with them. They have taught them lies and have avoided teaching the most important truths. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6). Just as it is today, the religious leaders in the days of Jeremiah also preached a false message of "peace and safety" before the destruction of Jerusalem. The Lord said, "…they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace" (Ezekiel 13:10).

Both the Catholic Church and the religious movement in the United States claim they are seeking world peace and wish to establish, "a kingdom of peace". They continue to unite the world, baiting the people to subdue to this religious movement with the promise that it will create peace in the world. This has happened

before. History is repeating itself. “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it? Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings... I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart... The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them” (Jeremiah 23:16-32).

Some quotations from the popular Christian movement in the USA:

"When you say, 'I am a Christian', you are saying, 'I am mashiach' in the Hebrew. I am a little messiah walking on the earth, in other words. That is a shocking revelation… may I say it like this? You are a little god on earth running around." Benny Hinn (from Praise-a-Thon program on TBN 11/6/90)

"Are you ready for some real revelation knowledge... you are God" (Our Position In Christ -tape # A031190-1).

"And I say this with all respect, so that it don't upset you too bad. But I say it anyway: When I read in the Bible where He says, "I AM," I just smile and say, "Yes, I AM, too."" (Believers Voice of Victory broadcast July 9, 1987).

"Don't tell me you have Jesus. You are everything He was and everything He is and ever shall be... Don't say, 'I have.' Say , 'I AM, I AM, I AM, I AM, I AM.' (Our Position in Christ #2-The Word Made Flesh audiotape Side 2 1991)

"You're all God. You don't have a God living in you; you are one!... When I read in the Bible where God tells Moses, 'I AM,' I say, 'Yah, I am too!'" ("The Force of Love," Tape BBC-56).

"You can negate your faith. You can stop the force of it and cause it to be feeble even though it's the very faith of Jesus Himself. The very faith that God used when He created... is the faith that's burning in your spirit... Well, He created all those planets, how come you can't create something? You don't know as much about it as He does. He has a greater working knowledge of that faith than you do. But we're learning. Our time is coming. And in some ways its already here." (John Hagee's Church Aug 18,1999)

"Yes! You are in control! So, if man has control, who no longer has it? God" (Fred Price, "Prayer: Do You Know What Prayer Is... and How to Pray?" (The Word Study Bible, 1990. p. 1178).

"Pray to yourself, because I'm in your self and you're in My self. We are one Spirit, saith the Lord." (Kenneth Copeland, "Believer's Voice of Victory", Feb. 1987, p.9)

“When we use the spiritual laws that God has set up, God must obey what we request.” (Praise the Lord, TBN, 2/5/86)

“I was shocked when I found out who the biggest failure in the Bible actually is...The biggest one is God... I mean, He lost His top-ranking, most anointed angel; the first man He ever created; the first woman He ever created; the whole earth and all the fullness therein; a third of the angels, at least—that’s a big loss, man. . . (Kenneth Copeland, Praise-a-Thon program on TBN [April 1988])

“Those who put us down are a bunch of morons... you know, I have looked for one verse in the Bible, I just can’t seem to find it. One verse that says, if you don’t like them kill them! I really wish I could find it... Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machinegun - I’ll blow your head of.” (Benny Hinn on TBN’s Praise-a-Thon, April 1990)

“There are often time harsh words for those who do not except the “new thing” and find themselves holding on to the old things of the word. “We are the ones who will choose if the next move of God will be a day of salvation or a day of judgement - for those who reject it... will have a more severe judgement - this next wave (of the Spirit) will not be stopped, and the opposition will soon be forgotten...” (Paul Cain, the Word and the Spirit Conference, London, October 1992)

“Don’t speak a word against signs and wonders and the prophetic ministries in these last days or God’s zeal will chasten you!” (Paul Cain, The Prophet Cries for the Nations. Dallas: Christ for the Nations, September 1989, p.5)

“I’d rather be in a church where the devil and the flesh are manifesting than in a church where nothing is happening because people are too afraid to manifest anything… And if the devil manifest, don’t worry about that either. Rejoice, because at least something is happening.” (Rodney Howard Browne, The Coming Revival, 1991 p.6)

“Jesus at His death became one with Satan” (Benny Hinn, Benny Hinn Broadcast, Recorded 5/12/90).

“To be honest with you what’s happening here is a sign and a wonder. It’s a sign to the individual, especially if you are a preacher of the gospel and you are no

longer able to preach. I tell you this is a miracle. To quieten any preacher is a major move of God." (Rodney Howard Browne, Toronto, The Christian Channel Europe "Chronicles of Revival" 17/2/98).

"I think God has given up on a lot of that old rotten Sanhedrin religious crowd, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. I think they are damned and on their way to hell and I don't think there is any redemption for them… I say to hell with you! Oh, hallelujah. Get out of God's way, quit blocking God's bridges or God's gonna shoot you if I don't!" (Paul Crouch, "Prais-A-Thon", Broadcast on TBN, recorded 2/4/91).

Dragon (Rev 12:9)	Prophecy about The Beast	The Beast (The Catholic Church Rev 13; Dan 7:7-8; 7:19-26)	The false prophet (The beast coming up out of the earth will make an image of the first beast. Rev 13:12,14,15; 19:20; 16:13)
The serpent in the Garden of Eden: "Ye shall be as gods..." (Genesis 3:5) "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isaiah 14:12-13) Satan made the first attempt to change God's commandments: "Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? ...Ye shall not surely die". (Genesis 3:1-3)	"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast" (Revelation 13:4) "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thessalonians 2:4) "And he shall speak [great] words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High" (Daniel 7:25) "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (Revelation 13:5) "and [he] shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws" (Dan 7:25) "And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest... The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word... The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance..." (Isaiah 24:1-6; Revelation 19:20)	"The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God... The Pope by reason of the excellence of his supreme dignity is called bishop of bishops... He is likewise bishop of the universal church... He is likewise the divine monarch and supreme emperor, and King of kings... Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as King of heaven and earth and of the lower regions." (Lucius Ferraris, Prompta Bibliotheca, vol.6, p.29.) "The Pope is not only the representative for Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under veil of flesh." (The Catholic National, July 1895). "Protestants... accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the changes... But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that in... observing the Sunday... they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope." (Our Sunday visitor, 5. Feb. 1950. Roman Catholic weekly newspaper)	From a leading charismatic teacher in the 'Christian' USA: "When you say, 'I am a Christian', you are saying, 'I am mashiach' in the Hebrew. I am a little messiah walking on the earth, in other words. That is a shocking revelation…may I say it like this? You are a little god on earth running around." Benny Hinn (from Praise-a-Thon program on TBN 11/6/90) "Are you ready for some real revelation knowledge... you are God" (Our Position In Christ -tape # A031190-1). "And I say this with all respect, so that it don't upset you too bad. But I say it anyway: When I read in the Bible where He says, "I AM," I just smile and say, "Yes, I AM, too." (Believers Voice of Victory broadcast July 9, 1987) "You're all God. You don't have a God living in you; you are one! ... When I read in the Bible where God tells Moses, 'I AM,' I say, 'Yah, I am too!'" ("The Force of Love," Tape BBC-56)."It is written that ye are gods. I'm a god you're a god. And I'm a god, and I'm gonna stay a god until you recognize that you're a god. But until I see you all knowing who you are, I'm going to be very much what I am—God, Almighty God." (Kenneth Hagin (Word of Faith, Dec. 1980, p.14) "It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and all other Christians, that the Bible does not support them anywhere in their observance of Sunday. Sunday is an institution of the Roman Catholic Church, and those who observe the day observe a commandment of the Catholic Church." (Priest Brady, at a lecture in N.J, USA, 17 March, 1903).

Dragon (Rev. 12:9)	Prophecy about The Beast	The Beast (The Catholic Church Rev 13; Dan 7:7-8; 7:19-26)	The false prophet (The beast coming up out of the earth will make an image of the first beast. Rev 13:12,14,15; 19:20; 16:13)
"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law... He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." (1 John 3:4-8)	"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work... And then shall that Wicked be revealed" (2 Thess 2:7-8)	"The pope has power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ."-(Decretal de Translat, Episcop. Cap.)	Most Christian churches today claim they are released from God's ten-commandment law: Jesus said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7: 21-23)
"Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments." (Exodus 7:11) "[Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess 2:9) "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Cor 11:14)	"[Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess 2:9) A prophesy (not only about the beast) "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (1 Tim 4:1)	Statues of Mary crying tears of blood, priests as well as others receive revelations from the "Virgin Mary". Since 1981 a figure of Mary reportedly gave regular messages in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina. The supernatural events surrounding the statue of Mary in Fatima, Portugal, continues to attract thousands of people every year. In Cairo a figure of Mary has appeared above a certain building several times. Countries all over the world are now experiencing supernatural phenomena, and so called "spirits of the dead" who preach conversion to God through Mary (among others). In the movie, "Prophecy and the New Times" by Maxkol Institute (1997) a Catholic priest relates how he received a vision where Jesus sentenced him to death, but the Virgin Mary intervened and pleaded for his life.	"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men," (Revelation 13:13) The great signs and wonders found in the Christian church in the USA today are those mentioned in Matthew 7:21) "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast" (Revelation 19:29) "One of the most popular preachers in the USA claims: "Seven and a half years ago, just before the ministry started, before these crusades began, I was in prayer when suddenly in front of me I saw a group of people. I couldn't even tell you who they were. I recognized only one of them. It was [the deceased] Miss Kullmann... (At least 50 to 70 of them were sitting in a group), and they were saying to me, "pray! Ask God to give you a healing ministry that will touch the world!" And suddenly I heard Katheryn's voice, ... Suddenly there - there she was, it's crystal clear." (Honolulu crusades, February 28th 1997)

Dragon (Rev. 12:9)	Prophecy about The Beast	The Beast (The Catholic Church Rev.13; Dan.7:7-8; 7:19-26)	The false prophet (The beast coming up out of the earth will make an image of the first beast. Rev 13:12,14,15; 19:20; 16:13)
"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not... Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.." (Revelation 12:7-8,12)	And he ...shall wear out the saints of the most High, ...and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." (Daniel 7:25) "the dragon which gave power unto the beast" (Revelation 13:4)	"For professing faith contrary to the teachings of the Church of Rome, history records the martyrdom of more than one hundred million people. A million Waldenses and Albigenses [Swiss and French Protestants] perished during a crusade proclaimed by Pope Innocent III in 1208. Beginning from the establishment of the Jesuits in 1540 to 1580, nine hundred thousand were destroyed. One hundred and fifty thousand perished by the Inquisition in thirty years. Within the space of thirty-eight years after the edict of Charles V against the Protestants, fifty thousand persons were hanged, beheaded, or burned alive for heresy. Eighteen thousand more perished during the administration of the Duke of Alva in five and a half years." (Brief Bible Readings page 16). "There is a class of people in this country who will not keep the Christian Sabbath [Sunday] unless they are forced to do so; but this can eaily be done... If we would say we will not sell anything to them, we will not buy anything from them, we will not work for them or hire them to work for us, the thing could be wiped out, and all the world would keep the Christian Sabbath. [meaning Sunday]" (Dr. Bascom Robins in an article in, "The Decalogue", Burlington, Kansas, January 1904).	Prophecy: "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him ...And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." (Revelation 13:11-15) "There are often time harsh words for those who do not except the "new thing" and find themselves holding on to the old things of the word. "We are the ones who will choose if the next move of God will be a day of salvation or a day of judgement - for those who reject it... will have a more severe judgement - this next wave (of the Spirit) will not be stopped, and the opposition will soon be forgotten..." (Paul Cain, the Word and the Spirit conference, London, October 1992) A Prophesy: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." (Revelation 13:16-17)
"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17)	"And the dragon gave him (the beast) his power, and his seat, and great authority. ..And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Revelation 13:2,7)		

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs [come] out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, [which] go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." (Revelation 16:13-14)

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT EXPOSES THE MARK OF THE BEAST

The fourth commandment: An issue of governmental rights

By showing mankind God's law, including the fourth commandment, the world will see that He who gave this law, is He who created the world. The earth and everything in it belongs to God, but the earth rebelled against God, and now the planet lives under the consequences of a 6000 year rebellion. Instead of destroying the earth and all of its inhabitants, He who created it, chose instead to die in order to give man another chance. This chance is granted on the simple condition that the individual ceases his or her rebellion against God and His government. Otherwise the misery would continue for all eternity. Today, every country possesses page upon page of books defining the laws of the land, but God's law fits on one small page of paper; ten simple commandments. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

When Satan tried to tempt Jesus into worshipping him by offering Him planet earth, he was offering him something he had originally stolen. The fourth commandment tells us who is the rightful owner of planet earth. Not only does it reveal who the rightful owner is, but it also exposes the deceiver who has usurped it.

In turn, the fourth commandment exposes all who place themselves in a position where they usurp this right. The rebel leader regards earth as his because man has shown loyalty towards him, but the planet was not man's to give away, it was only given to man under certain conditions. Therefore we are regarded as rebels until we return our loyalty to God. He says, "I have made the earth, the

man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my out-stretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me" (Jeremiah 27:5).

All the countries of the world, from the smallest to the greatest, struggle for power and influence over our planet. Superpowers like the United States of America are highly regarded and enjoy an overwhelming influence over other smaller countries. However, despite all this, even regulations endorsed by the greatest of superpowers, cannot change the fact that this planet belongs to the Creator. Every act and every motive carried out against the Owner of this earth, is counted as rebellion against His law and His government. Whatever law man passes, whatever decisions are made here on earth, nothing can change God's eternal law which stretches across the entire universe, and all other worlds.

So by tampering with the fourth commandment, we have tampered with the very commandment that tells us, we have no right to establish laws on earth that oppose God's law. To try to change the day which is a sign of who created this planet, and therefore who has all rights over it, is an abuse of a right that belongs only to God. Sunday worship, and Sunday laws enforcing Sunday worship, pay homage to the created, and make a mockery of the Creator. By attempting to change this commandment, man makes claims over God's governmental rights. If man can change God's law, then man creates his own rules and he becomes his own god. The Catholic Church also understands that changing the fourth commandment is an issue of governmental rights. That is why they regard their right to change the Sabbath as indicative of their governmental power over heaven and earth. The Sabbath commandment is a sign of authority, power and governmental rights over the earth. The fourth commandment, as it is written in the law, gives God all rights.

God has only ever given those rights to the Messiah, and He only ever taught that His mission was to uphold and "magnify" God's commandments. He even said, that if He did not do this, then that would be evidence that He was not the Son of God, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." (John 10:37). "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16), "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgement is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true" (John 5:30-31).

So according to Christ's own words, we will know when the false messiahs shall come as have been prophesied. Their testimonies will not be true if they oppose God's law, or His government, or if they try to steal God's governmental rights by removing the seal of the Creator, and replacing it with their own. This we can know and trust despite what supposedly benevolent reasons will be given at the time to support their claims.

When Protestants and other Christians choose to follow in the footsteps of the Catholic Church, and claim the Sabbath commandment has been done away with or changed, then they are just as guilty as the Catholic Church.

In a world that is falling apart and where evil is ruling, it is of the utmost importance to receive God's seal. A seal which will be a sign to God, identifying those who are faithful to Him. "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them" (Ezekiel 20:12), "And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God" (Ezekiel 20:20).

"It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law" (Psalm 119:126).

When the United States of America, apostate Protestantism and all other churches become servants under the authority of the Pope, by obeying him before God, and by enforcing Sunday sacredness (the mark of the false creator) by law, then God will give man one final chance before the door of probation closes, and the seven last plagues (Revelation 16) are poured out upon the earth. "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye" (Ezekiel 18:32). In a compassionate call to repentance, Jesus longs to stretch out His arms, to embrace those who are deceived, and to give those who deceive others one last final chance.

Shortly after the United States of America has enforced the mark of the beast law, Jesus will allow the tables of the law to be shown to the whole world. Christ's precious blood, revealing His true covenant with man, will then be known around the world. All will have the opportunity to receive a love for the truth, so that they might be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:10). The whole world will soon see the evidence that the New Covenant still contains the law of the Ten

Commandments, and God's true seventh day Sabbath. Just as it is with the Ten Commandments lying in the heavenly Ark, the copy of that law here on earth, also written with God's own finger, cannot be changed, because, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it" (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

The discovery will not only prove the Bible is true, but also that the law was confirmed as a part of the covenant on the cross and that it cannot be changed after it was confirmed. As the Holy Scripture says, "yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto" (Galatians 3:15). Paul said that it was when Christ died that the testament was enforced, and who would ever change a testament (a will) after the death of the one who confirmed it? Would that not be robbing whoever made the testament? Nothing could be added to the covenant after it was confirmed on the cross; not the law nor our Saviour's position as Sacrifice and High Priest.

The discovery of the Ark of the Covenant will show the whole world that there is no salvation in any other name than the name of Christ, and that no one can forgive sin except Him; not the virgin Mary (who is lying in her grave awaiting the resurrection), not the Pope nor any priest. Nor could the Mediator in the covenant be changed, which also exposes the Pope's claim to be the Vicar of Christ as unbiblical, and a lie. There is only one Mediator in the covenant that was confirmed for all times on the cross, and that is Christ Jesus. The tables of the law will be a witness to all Protestants and Catholics who have tried to change, or even rejected God's law. The sample of Christ's blood will be a witness to all Jews, Muslims, Hindus and every other religion which does not recognize Christ as the Son of God.

God will let the tables of the law cry out aloud as a testimony to all the world, of a loving hand, stretched out to a deceived and stubborn world. The world will have one final chance to accept Christ before He comes back. Even so, few we are told, will receive Him. The Book of Daniel reveals that few will be faithful, but that the world will understand what the truth is. The Bible tells us of the time the door of probation closes, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26). When all have learned what the truth is and what the covenant involves, and if they still choose to oppose it, then the door of probation will close for them, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy,

who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant… an unholy thing". The blood of the covenant will give a loud cry, and those who oppose the truth will be lost, because then there is nothing more God can do for them, for He will never force anyone to follow Him. It will break His heart when so many will choose to show faithfulness to the serpent, sun god, or Satan, when He has even given His life in order to offer man everlasting life.

Let us remember the prophecy of Isaiah, revealing why the earth at the end will be destroyed, "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" (Isaiah 24:4-5).

Up until now practically every person on this planet has heard of Christ, but His teaching has been partially surrounded in darkness and lies. God's law, and the reason Christ had to die have rarely been preached according to the true gospel. The discovery of The Ark of the Covenant will light up the true gospel to the entire world; but God needs messengers. "Who shall I send, who will go?" He asks. Who will carry through God's work on earth with Him? Who wants to spread the true gospel to light up the world that has for so long been deceived by hundreds of different gospels? "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

THE LAST GREAT DECEPTION

"The apostle John in vision heard a loud voice in heaven exclaiming: "Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12:12. Fearful are the scenes which call forth this exclamation from the heavenly voice. The wrath of Satan increases as his time grows short, and his work of deceit and destruction will reach its culmination in the time of trouble.

Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the descrip-

tion of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: "Christ has come! Christ has come!"

The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying: This is "the great power of God." Acts 8:10.

But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God's unmingled wrath shall be poured out.

And, furthermore, Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ's advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. "There shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. . . . Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:24-27, 31; 25:31; Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known--witnessed by the whole world.

Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in

his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be overcharged with the cares of this life and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief."

(The Great Controversy, Ellen G. White, pages 623 - 625).

THE DREAM OF A KINGDOM OF PEACE

The Dream of a Kingdom of Peace

The expectation of a godly kingdom of peace is not something new, and throughout history many people, from churches as well as from wordly institutions, have shared their views and thoughts in writings, speeches and actions. Many Christians today believe that the Bible prophesies such a kingdom of peace here on earth. The expectations were especially great as we entered the year 2000, which is said to be the beginning of a new millennium. But nothing happened, and the result was a massive wave of disappointment and even confusion. Is it possible that a deeper Bible study would have prevented a misunderstanding such as this? What exactly does the Bible teach on this matter?

The Jewish Error

The Bible tells us how Jesus, "…came to His own, and His own received Him not." (John 1:11). Through Moses and the prophets the Israelites had been taught about the coming Messiah, but a neglect of deep study of Scripture, and wilful ignorance, coupled with their desire for wordly power laid the foundation for their rejection of Jesus as the Son of God. They had confused the prophecies of His second coming with His first advent, and chose to ignore those which described Jesus as the humble, suffering, sacrificial Lamb who was to die for the sins of the people. Instead they expected a saviour in pomp and circumstance who would not call His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21), but deliver them from the Roman dominion and establish a great Israeli kingdom, where human authorities enforced their laws.

Even Christ's own disciples shared this opinion, and this is partly why they did not fully understand His real mission until after He was resurrected and taken up to heaven, and they were given the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. To them, and indeed to all who since then have had expectations of a kingdom of God here on earth, Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Joakim of Fiore

The word "millennium" is not mentioned in the Bible. However, a period of 1000 years is mentioned several times in the Book of Revelation, chapter 20. In this period Satan is bound, while God's true people reign with Him. Many religious and political movements throughout history have claimed to be the true executive of this "kingdom". In the Middle Ages this chapter became the subject of new speculations about the 1000 year long kingdom.

One man, whose ideas surfaced prominantly, is Joakim of Fiore (1135-1202), a former Benedictine monk who later broke away and established his own monastic order in southern Italy. Joakim divided history into three stages; the first period lasted from Adam to Christ (and centered around the Father. When it was normal for monks to be married); Christ then began the next period, which according to Joakim was soon coming to an end (the Son was the centre of this period, and it was the priests who dominated), and soon the third and final stage would begin, the Millennium. This period was to be the age of the Holy Spirit, and it was the designated monks who were to have power. Supposedly, not until then, when a total break from the old age had taken place, would perfect and complete harmony occur.

Hitler

Adolf Hitler had great visions about a Millennium, "Der Dritte Reich" (the Third Kingdom/Empire) as he called it, which would begin when the war terminated. In this kingdom the German people together with others of the "Germanic race" would rule in peace and happiness over other "lower races".

The Pope's Diary

Some years ago a lady was said to have found the diary of Pope John XXIII in an unused storage room in the Vatican. In this diary John records how he was visited by "the Virgin Mary" several times, and she informed him of the natural disasters, wars, famines, diseases and other problems which would occur in the coming years. These meetings, where "Mary" "shared her heartache" with the late Pope, were supposed to have happened between 1959-62. According to the diary, this planet should have been visited by "strange looking saviors from heaven" in June 1995. They would cleanse the earth, repair the environment and share much of their superior knowledge with mankind. On her final visit, "Mary" supposedly said that Messiah will appear above New York City on the 25th of December 2000 to announce the beginning of a second paradise here on earth...

If the Pope really did keep such a diary and was visited by a "Mary", we can be sure that it is not Mary, the mother of Jesus. She has been dead a long time, and the Bible teaches that death is a sleep, (Matthew 9:24), an unconscious state (Ecclisiastes 9:5-6,10 & 12:7, Psalm115:17), and that the dead will not wake up from their sleep until the resurrection which takes place at the second coming of Christ (John 6:40, Matthew 22:31-32, Daniel 12:2, John 5:29 & 14:3, 1 Thesselonians 4:16). At the same time, the Bible warns us against spiritualism and contact with "the dead", because this is not from God, but a deceptive work of Satan (Deuteronomy 18:10-12, Exodus 7:11-12 & 22:18, Micah 5:11, Acts 19:13-20, Galatians 5:19-21, Revelation 21:8).

Equally as important to remember are these words spoken by Christ Himself, concerning His second coming, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Even if an angel of light were to appear to us and tell us that Jesus is coming at a certain time, then we will know this is not of God as Jesus warned us that His angels do not know the time of His coming. Jesus' advice to us is, "Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh... It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His power" (Matthew 25:13, Acts 1:7).

God's Kingdom

Christ said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there!". Then He explained what the kingdom of God really is, "For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21). Man's dream of gaining material pleasures and worldly greatness have made him long for a "kingdom of God" here on earth. Many a dream and philosophical idea have remained unfulfilled, because this is not what the Bible teaches.When the infidel Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out devils by the power of Satan, He answered, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? ...But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matthew 12:26, 28).

The Bible tells us that, "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17), and, "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Corinthians 4:20). The kingdom of God begins within the heart. God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Ephesians 3:20). "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). God guides us with His grace, "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world..." (Titus 2:11-12). But this requires a complete surrender from us. Daily we must die to self. "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life... Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:4,6). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh [i.e. our sinful nature], but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1). By the help and power of the Holy Spirit we may daily gain victory over each and every sin in our lives (Galations 5:16). God has promised that He will give us His Holy Spirit, but it is up to us to lay claim to His promises. Jesus "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

"Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the

implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12, 13. Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God… Now, as in Christ's day, the work of God's kingdom lies not with those who are clamoring for recognition and support by earthly rulers and human laws, but with those who are declaring to the people in His name those spiritual truths that will work in the receivers the experience of Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20. Then they will labor as did Paul for the benefit of men. He said, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor 5:20. (The Desire of Ages, Ellen G.White, page 509-510).

The 1000 years

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old sepent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Revelation 20:1-3). To understand the situation here presented we need to go back to chapter 19, verses 11-16, which describe the second coming of Christ, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True... And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. [see John 1:1,14] And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean... And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Jesus compared His second coming with flashes of lightning, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27). It will be a mighty event, not something that will take place in secret. "Behold, He cometh with the clouds;

and every eye shall see Him." (Revelation 1:7). In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul writes, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: The we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). Note that those who are alive at the time, "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Jesus will not rest His feet upon this earth, He will stay in the air. Therefore we cannot say, "Behold, He is in the desert!" or "Behold, He is in the secret chambers!" (Matthew 24:26). But God's people, through all times, will be caught up to Him in the air and be taken to heaven, where they will reign with Him for 1000 years (Revelation 20:4).

Before Satan is bound, God will call to account those who have fought against Him. "And the beast [the papacy, Revelation 13] was taken, and with him the false prophet [which speaks lies, claiming the name of God, seducing thousands of people] that wrought miracles before him... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant [the others, those who have rejected God] were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth." (Revelation 19:20-21). Then the situation described in Revelation 20:1-3 follows.

Up until here we have seen that all the children of God, both those alive and those who are dead at the second coming, are taken to heaven where they live together with Christ, while the ungodly (all the others throughout history) are dead. The only being left on earth is Satan. There is no one here he can seduce, and the only thing he can do is ponder the result of the awful destruction and rebellion which he has caused. "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." (Isaiah 13:9). Jeremiah describes the condition of the earth this way too, "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger." (Jeremiah 4:23-26).

The Fair Judgement of God

As we have seen, Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonians, describes the resurrection of those who died in the faith of Jesus. *But* Revelation 20:5 tells us, "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." John describes the activity which takes place in heaven during these 1000 years as follows, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4). "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6).

Jesus spoke of a time when, "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28-29). The first resurrection takes place when Jesus returns to earth at His second coming. So when will the second resurrection, "the resurrection of damnation", take place? We have already read that, "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." And it is at exactly this time, "when the thousand years are expired", that Satan, "shall be loosed out of his prison." (Revelation 20:7). Once again he will have millions of people to seduce, and he, "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." (Revelation 20:8-9). Satan makes his last and final attempt to make war against God and His people, but he has already lost. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone..." (Revelation 20:10). It is time for judgement. It is written that all, small and great, "were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hell (Greek, "hades", "the kingdom of death") were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:13-15).

Those who are saved, and took part in the first resurrection, will receive their prize of triumph, "To Him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God... He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death... He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life... He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out... To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne..." (Revelation 2:7&11, 3:5,12&21). They have inherited eternal life!

The ungodly, who rose (from the dead) to their judgement after the 1000 years, will experience, "the second death" (Revelation 21:18), which means eternal perdition and destruction. Is this destruction a cruel act from God? No! God so loved these people that He gave His only begotten Son for them, that they should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). But they did not accept Him. They chose to follow their own lusts and pleasures instead of denying themselves, taking up their cross and following Jesus on the road of self-sacrifice. They loved the world and their own life more than they loved God. Being dead for the 1000 years has not changed their attitude or made them more willing to honour and serve God. No, instead they follow Satan again as he will, "gather them together to battle." If God allowed these people access to heaven, they would only continue with their evil work there. "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them." (Isaiah 26:10-11).

(By Hanne Trangerud, "Obadiah" (Norwegian magazine) No. 2, 1999, Norway).

“COME OUT OF HER”

The last battle between good and evil will first and foremost be a battle between truth and deception. A very great deception, disguised in a Christian cloak will be (and indeed has been) spread across the earth, but a great warning will follow it, not to believe this deception, or obey those who represent it. The whole world must be warned against this deception which has been raging onward throughout history and which will continue in the latter days before Christ’s coming.

God must again have a people who will stand for truth and expose the erroneous doctrine. The message, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” tells us about this Babylonian teaching one day being fully exposed. In a world where Satan has stirred up intense confusion by creating hundreds of different religions and Christian denominations, God will use the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant and the blood of Christ to reveal who His people are, and what His truth really is.

In the city of Jericho there was a woman named Rahab who joined with the Israelites before Jericho was destroyed. In the same way God is now calling all those who are sincere, and who wish to serve Him. He is calling them out of all the different religions, denominations and false systems of worship, where erroneous doctrine is the direction of faith. He appeals to all who have been deceived by the Babylonian teachings, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4). Come out of Babylon so you will not suffer the consequences that face those who worship the beast and his image, for they “shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation” (Revelation 14:9).

Rahab and her family were saved out of Jericho and became part of Israel and inheritors of the promise together with the Israelites. “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Romans 9:6). “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13), “when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement” (John 16:8). “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:14), “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17) “That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” (Romans 9:8) “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God” (1 John 3:10) “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” (1 John 5:2-3) “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN HIM.” (1 John 2:3-4).

All those within churches that cling to Babylonian doctrine must answer God’s final call to “come out of her”. All who accept the calling from God to stand on His side, will become His children no matter where they came from, how they look, what they have done in their past or who they have been before, because He promises, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Hebrews 8:12). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16), “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32).

God’s last warning message to the world and to those deceived by those false religious systems, is a cry to us with heartfelt tears. At the beginning of the book, we asked, “Has God really been silent?” or is it “us that have closed our ears to Him”? God wants to save man, but too many turn their back on His justice, His law and His sacrifice for mankind. Whoever does this will no doubt remain within the walls of false doctrine, and perish, “because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2

Thessalonians 2:11-12).

“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.” (Ezekiel 18:31-32).

“Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires… In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake… No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgement thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.” (Isaiah 54:4-17).

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